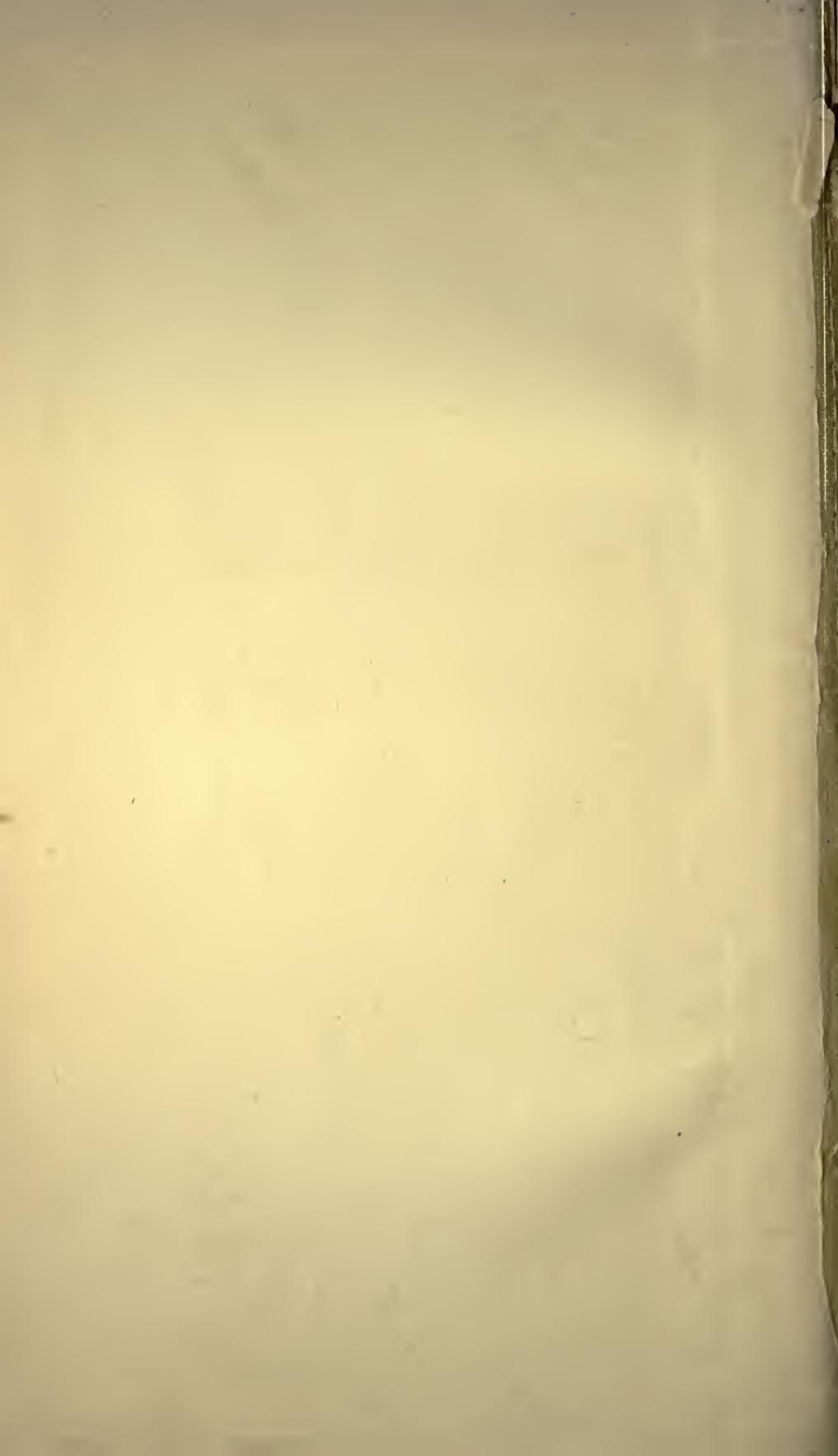




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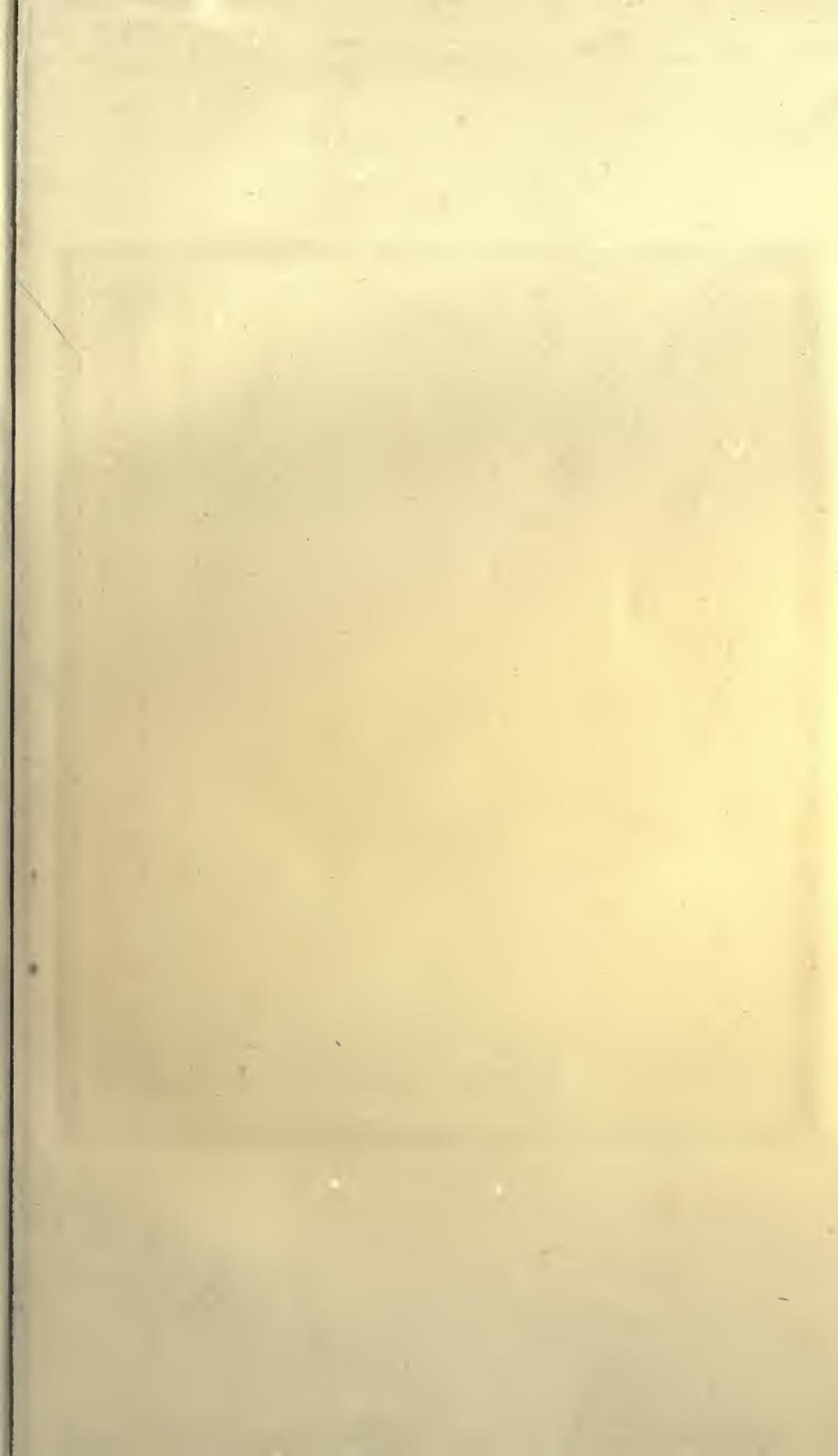






THE LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
JOHN DONNE







JOHN DONNE

From the original painting in the Deanery of S<sup>t</sup> Pauls.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS  
JOHN DONNE

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME EDITED AND ILLUSTRATED BY

EDMUND GOSSE

FORMERLY M.A. OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
AND M.A. OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

WITH PORTRAIT, ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON  
WILLIAM HEINEMANN  
1899

WORMS DUNKE

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OF

# JOHN DONNE

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

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LAST YEARS AS A LAYMAN

1612-1615



## CHAPTER X

### LAST YEARS AS A LAYMAN

1612-1615

WE have now to traverse a period in the life of Donne which was transitional, and in its nature unsatisfactory. Of these years nothing was known to Walton, and we can understand that Donne would not speak much of them, or even, perhaps, recollect their existence. Yet they were of extreme importance in his career; they formed the bridge between his old life and his new. He seemed in the course of them to be further than ever from taking orders in the Church of England; from the majority of his writings of this period, whether public or private, the possible divine seems to be rigorously excluded; and yet circumstances were so closing around him as to make his ultimate destination an inevitable one. He was in his fortieth year when he returned from the Low Countries, and although his gifts and charms were acknowledged in a widening circle of friends, there was a curious fatality by which a professional use of them was always frustrated. He was ambitious, he was eager to be independent, he was justly confident in his marvellous powers, and yet at the age of forty, Donne, perhaps the most brilliantly equipped mind in his Majesty's dominions, was nobody and nothing still.

His financial position, however, though precarious, must at this time have been more than easy. He was still, it is to be supposed, being paid that liberal quarterly allowance from Sir George More which Sir Francis Wooley had lived just long enough to secure him. He was still freely entertained in apartments within Drury House, under the

charge of a Lady Bartlet, doubtless the widow of his friend Sir Thomas Bartlet, in the service of Sir Robert Drury. The mode in which this Lady Bartlet is repeatedly mentioned gives the impression that she superintended the wants of the household, thus relieving Mrs. Donne, whose weak constitution would be sufficiently bowed down by the weight of her army of children. We find that Donne is constantly travelling ; he is now at Bath, now at Windsor, now in the Isle of Wight. He is waited on by a French man-servant of his own. He moves, with none of the old sense of embarrassment, among people of wealth and ostentatious expenditure. All this means comfort, and even luxury ; and we may put wholly aside the impression that Donne, in these latest years of his life as a layman, was in want of any of the agreeable concomitants of fortune.

Yet he knew that it all rested on the most fragile basis. His apartments might be sumptuous, but his tenure of them depended on the whim of Sir Robert Drury ; his wife's allowance might be liberal, but it depended on the very uncertain fortunes of a fashionable and reckless old spendthrift. If the present was comfortable, the future must have filled the mind of Donne with alarm. The deaths of two persons might at any moment throw him penniless on the street, and consequently his one obsession was how to obtain a place at court or some species of "preferment." The letters which we shall presently print give melancholy testimony to the degree in which this anxiety coloured his life at this time, and excluded higher considerations. We find him gay and sociable in his own chosen company, where his wit took fire, and where he became the centre of a circle of vivacity and joy ; but from these happy seasons at the feet of Lady Bedford, or surrounded by the graceful and brilliant little court which she gathered in the mazes of her garden at Twickenham, Donne would return intensely dejected to the wife dragged down by a multitude of children, and to the dependent existence in a wing of Drury House.

It may be well to take this opportunity of recording the elements of Donne's family. When he came back from

Brussels in the autumn of 1612 his wife met him with seven children. Of these Constance, the eldest, was but nine years old; John, his father's future editor, was eight; George was seven, Francis five, Lucy four; Bridget was not yet three, and Mary was in her second year. Always ailing and depressed, though sublimely tender and loyal, Mrs. Donne was, as it were, crushed beneath this army of irresponsible babies, to whom indeed she was presently to succumb. The family seems, however, to have got through the remainder of 1612 and the early part of 1613 with tolerable success; but in July 1613 Donne was stricken by serious illness, and 1614 was one of the darkest years of their existence. The poet was attacked again and again by a combination of gastric and rheumatic disorders, and was threatened later on with blindness. Mrs. Donne's health gave way still further, after the birth of yet another son, Nicholas, who was baptized at St. Clement Danes on the 3rd of August 1613. Sickness fell upon the children one after another; on the 18th of May 1614 Mary was buried at St. Clement Danes, and Francis on the 10th of November following. Nicholas is mentioned no more, and probably died in the course of the fatal year. Nothing could be more wretched than the picture which we rather divine than see of the melancholy fortune of the Donnes in 1614.

We are going, however, a little too far ahead. When Donne returned with the Drurys to England in the autumn of 1612, the principal object of public interest was the success of the negotiations with the Elector Palatine and his approaching marriage with the Princess Elizabeth. Sir Robert Drury's part in all this, however, can scarcely have been even that of the fly on the wheel, although he and Donne may possibly have been in the Palatinate when the ambassadors of the Princes of the Protestant German Union made their formal request in England for the hand of the Princess, and signed the marriage contract in May 1612, a few days before the death of Salisbury. They may, moreover, have been empowered to precede the Elector Palatine as a sort of intellectual guard of honour, when he sailed over to England in September to greet his affianced bride.

But it is much more probable that the vanity of Sir Robert Drury exaggerated his own importance on this occasion. Still Donne appears to have been in some way authorised to celebrate the approaching nuptials; he retained, as we know from his later expressions, much of the esteem with which the Princess had learned to regard him during the time she spent as the ward of Lord Harington.

The sudden illness of the Prince of Wales, who died of typhoid fever on the 6th of November, diverted every one's thoughts and postponed the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth. This promising lad of eighteen was the most popular person in England, and his death was mourned as a national disaster. Whether Donne had known him personally is uncertain. There exists, among the papers of the Marquis of Bath, a didactic epistle in which Donne, having dedicated a book to the King, sends a copy of it to Prince Henry. This book was manifestly the *Pseudo-Martyr* of 1610, but there is no evidence that the Prince of Wales, whose mind by no means ran in the same channel as his father's, was attracted by this rather ponderous piece of controversial literature. Donne was somewhat behind-hand in lamenting the popular prince, but his elegy was added in 1613 to a third edition of Joshua Sylvester's *Lachrymæ Lachrymarum, or the Spirit of Tears distilled for the untimely death of the incomparable Prince Panaretus*. The "Sundry Funeral Elegies" have the air of being written in competition by a group of friends, and their authors are, indeed, mainly men whose names occur repeatedly in this narrative; besides Donne himself, we meet with Sir William Cornwallis, Sir Edward Herbert, Sir Henry Goodyer, George Gerrard, Joseph Hall, and Henry Holland. Donne's lament runs to about one hundred lines; it is the most obscure, frigid, and affected that he ever composed, and is not animated by one touch of sincere emotion. Ben Jonson told Drummond that Donne, having read Herbert's elegy, which is obscure enough, tried in his own to be still more obscure. If so, he may be congratulated on having occasionally reached in it an opacity and density which are not likely ever to be surpassed. The conceits on this occasion

are not even in themselves amusing, unless it be that which celebrates the extraordinary intelligence of the Prince by saying that when other princes angled for his wit in conversation they

“Met a torpedo, and were stupefied.”

The one personal touch in this very bad poem occurs near its close, where Donne proclaims his fealty to the Princess Elizabeth, whose passionate love for her brother had defied the doctors, and had awakened a thrill of sympathy throughout the country. Donne exclaims—

“O may I, since I live, but see or hear  
That she-intelligence which moved this sphere,”

and this he was presently to succeed in doing.

The title of this lugubrious collection of elegies is executed in white letters on a black ground: the poems are printed within a black border, displaying figures of Death on either side; the left-hand pages are wholly black, having only the Prince’s arms. An elegy on Sir William Sidney concludes the volume, which offers us a very curious example of the bad taste of the age.

We have now to print certain undated letters which appear to belong to the close of 1612. It is even possible that the earliest of these was written from the Low Countries as a kind of circular missive, to ensure a general welcome in September.

“*To all my friends: Sir H. GOODYER.*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I am not weary of writing; it is the coarse but durable garment of my love; but I am weary of wanting you. I have a mind like those bodies which have hot livers and cold stomachs; or such a distemper as travelled me at Paris; a fever and dysentery: in which, that which is physic to one infirmity, nourishes the other. So I abhor nothing more than sadness, except the ordinary remedy, change of company.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

“I can allow myself to be *animal sociale*, appliable to my company, but not *gregale*, to herd myself in every troop. It is not perfectly true which a very subtle, yet very deep wit, Averroes, says, that all mankind hath but one soul, which informs and rules us all, as one intelligence doth the firmament and all the stars in it; as though a particular body were too little an organ for a soul to play upon. And it is as imperfect which is taught by that religion which is most accommodate to sense (I dare not say to reason, though it have appearance of that too, because none may doubt but that that religion is certainly best which is reasonablest). That all mankind hath one protecting angel; all Christians one other, all English one other, all of one corporation and every civil coagulation or society one other; and every man one other. Though both these opinions express a truth, which is, that mankind hath very strong bounds to cohabit and concur in other than mountains and hills during his life. First, common and mutual necessity of one another; and therefore naturally in our defence and subventions we first fly to ourselves; next, to that which is likest other men. Then, natural and inborn charity, beginning at home, which persuades us to give that we may receive: and legal charity, which makes us also forgive. Then an ingrafting in one another, and growing together by a custom of society; and last of all, strict friendship, in which band men were so presumed to be coupled, that our Confessor King had a law, that if a man be killed, the murderer shall pay a sum *felago suo*, which the interpreters call, *fide ligato, et comite vitæ*.

“All these bands I willingly receive, for no man is less of himself than I, nor any man enough of himself. To be so is all one with omnipotence. And it is well marked, that in the holy Book, wheresoever they have rendered Almighty, the word is self-sufficient. I think sometimes that the having a family should remove me far from the curse of *væ soli*. But in so strict obligation of parent, or husband, or master (and perchance it is so in the last degree of friendship), where all are made one, I am not the less alone for being in the midst of them. Therefore this *oleum lœtitiæ*,

this balm of our lives, this alacrity which dignifies even our service to God, this gallant enemy of dejection and sadness (for which and wickedness the Italian allows but one word, *triste*: and in full condemnation whereof it was prophesied of our blessed Saviour, *non erit tristis*, in His conversation), must be sought and preserved diligently. And since it grows without us, we must be sure to gather it from the right tree.

“They which place this alacrity only in a good conscience deal somewhat too roundly with us, for when we ask the way they show us the town afar off. Will a physician consulted for health and strength bid you have good sinews and equal temper? It is true that this conscience is the resultance of all other particular actions; it is our triumph and banquet in the haven; but I would come towards that also (as mariners say), with a merry wind. Our nature is meteoric, we respect (because we partake so) both earth and heaven; for as our bodies glorified shall be capable of spiritual joy, so our souls demerged into those bodies are allowed to partake earthly pleasure. Our soul is not sent hither, only to go back again: we have some errand to do here; nor is it sent into prison because it comes innocent, and He which sent it is just.

“As we may not kill ourselves, so we may not bury ourselves: which is done or endangered in a dull monastic sadness, which is so much worse than jollity (for upon that word I durst

---

— And certainly despair is infinitely worse than presumption: both because this is an excess of love, that of fear; and because this is up, that down the hill; easier, and more stumbling. Heaven is expressed by singing, hell by weeping. And though our Blessed Saviour be never noted to have laughed, yet His countenance is said ever to be smiling. And that even moderate mirth of heart, and face, is all I wish to myself, and persuade you to keep.

“This alacrity is not had by a general charity and equanimity to all mankind, for that is to seek fruit in a wilderness: nor from a singular friend, for that is to fetch it out of your own pocket; but the various and

abundant grace of it is good company. In which no rank, no number, no quality, but ill, and such a degree of that as may corrupt and poison the good, is exempt. For in nearer than them, your friend, and somewhat nearer than he, in yourself you must allow some inordinateness of affections and passions. For it is not true that they are not natural, but storms and tempests of our blood and humours; for they are natural, but sickly. And as the Indian priests expressed an excellent charity by building hospitals and providing chirurgery for birds and beasts lamed by mischance, or age, or labour: so must we, not cut off, but cure these affections, which are the bestial part."

[signature lost.]

The next may also belong to almost any part of 1612. The "book of French satires" was, without doubt, the first authoritative edition of Regnier's *Satyres et autres œuvres folastres*, published in 1612 while Donne was in Paris. This issue was the first to contain the celebrated "Macette," which cannot but have greatly interested Donne, as the entirely successful execution of a scheme which he himself had unsuccessfully attempted twenty years before. The health of the great French poet was now failing, and he was to die a few months later in Rouen. It is deeply to be regretted that it did not occur to Donne to preserve a few notes for us of what he may have seen or heard about Regnier.

"*To Yourself* [GEORGE GERRARD].<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—I make shift to think that I promised you this book of French satires. If I did not, yet it may have the grace of acceptation, both as it is a very forward and early fruit, since it comes before it was looked for, and as it comes from a good root, which is an importune desire to serve you. Which since I saw from the beginning that I should never do in any great thing, it is time to begin to try now, whether by often doing little services I can come

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

towards any equivalence. For, except I can make a rule of natural philosophy serve also in moral offices, that as the strongest bodies are made of the smallest particles, so the strongest friendships may be made of often iterating small officiousnesses, I see I can be good for nothing.

“Except you know reason to the contrary, I pray deliver this letter according to the address. It hath no business nor importunity; but as by our law a man may be *felo de se* if he kill himself, so I think a man may be *fur de se* if he steal himself out of the memory of them which are content to harbour him. And now I begin to be loath to be lost, since I have afforded myself some valuation and price ever since I received the stamp and impression of being

“Your very humble and affectionate servant,  
“J. DONNE.”

Another letter, the date of which is difficult to fix. From the wording it is evident that it is not Sir Thomas Roe but Donne who is “abroad.” Yet Donne, returning to London, was disappointed to find this greatly valued friend not there to welcome him, Sir Thomas Roe being absent in 1612 in the West Indies:—

“To Sir THOMAS ROE.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—It is an ease to your friends abroad that you are more a man of business than heretofore, for now it were an injury to trouble you with a busy letter. But by the same reason I were inexcusable if I should not write at all, since the less the more acceptable; therefore, Sir, though I have no more to say but to renew the obligations I have towards you, and to continue my place in your love, I would not forbear to tell you so.

“If I shall also tell you that when this place affords anything worth your hearing I will be your relator, I think I take so long a day, as you would forget the debt, it appears yet to be so barren. Howsoever, with every com-

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

modity, I shall say something, though it be but a descant upon this plain song, that I am

“Your affectionate servant,  
J. DONNE.”

“To my honoured friend Mr. GEORGE GERRARD.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I cannot choose but make it a presage that I shall have no good fortune in England, that I missed the honour of enjoying that company which you brought to town. But I beseech you let my ill-luck determine in that ominousness; for if my not coming should be by her or you interpreted for a negligence or coldness in me, I were already in actual and present affliction. For that ecclesiastical lady of whom you write, since I presume it is a work of darkness that you go about, we will defer it for winter. Perchance the cold weather may be as good physic to you as she for quenching you. I have changed my purpose of going to Windsor, and will go directly into the Wight; which I tell you not as a concerning thing, but in obedience to your commandment, as one poor testimony that I am

“Your affectionate servant,  
J. DONNE.”

[Oct. 1612?]

The death of Prince Henry postponed the marriage of Princess Elizabeth for four months, but such was the popular enthusiasm for this staunch Protestant match that, whatever unwillingness the King may have felt, he made no attempts to delay the solemnisation of it any further. Her bridegroom was the Elector Palatine Frederick V., a jovial, easy prince, who won all hearts over to him, and contrived even to conquer the intense prejudice which the Queen had conceived against him. On the 14th of February 1613 the wedding took place, with incomparable display and such magnificence as may still be read of with amazement in the pages of Nichols' *Progresses*. Donne was honoured with a commission to compose the marriage song on this auspicious occasion, and he was as happily inspired

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

in his epithalamium as a few months previously he had been unfortunate in his elegy. His Marriage Song for St. Valentine's Day is, indeed, one of his happiest productions, as fresh and gay as if a youth had written it, instead of a staid, melancholy paterfamilias of forty ; and it is a poem singularly little troubled by the prevailing faults of Donne's style. It has all the characteristics required for an epithalamium ; and a certain levity or faint fescennine quality, which is disconcerting, perhaps, to the refined taste of to-day, detracted in no wise from its merits in the judgment of the gravest or the most exalted personages in the reign of James I. Thus it opens, in a melodious burst of garrulity—

“ Hail, Bishop Valentine, whose day this is ;  
 All the air is thy diocese,  
 And all the chirping choristers  
 And other birds are thy parishioners ;  
 Thou marriest every year  
 The lyric lark, and the grave whispering dove,  
 The sparrow that neglects his life for love,  
 The household bird with the red stomacher ;  
 Thou mak'st the blackbird speed as soon  
 As doth the goldfinch or the halcyon ;  
 The husband-cock looks out, and straight is sped,  
 And meets his wife, who brings her feather-bed ;  
 This day more cheerfully than ever shine ;  
 This day, which might inflame thyself, old Valentine.”

The bird-analogy is preserved by telling the Bishop that his duty to-day is to unite two phœnixes,

“ Whose love and courage never shall decline,  
 But make the whole year through, thy day, O Valentine.”

And in the address to the Bride, Donne rises to a great dignity and a rare music—

“ Come forth, come forth, and as one glorious flame  
 Meeting another grows the same,  
 So meet thy Frederick, and so  
 To an inseparable union go,  
 Since separation  
 Falls not on such things as are infinite,  
 Nor things, which are but one, can disunite ;  
 You're twice inseparable, great, and one.”

But the cleverest and perhaps the most poetical things in this delightful epithalamium are removed too far from us by nearly three centuries to be conveniently quoted here.

At this period, George Gerrard seems to have been Donne's most favoured correspondent.

*“To Yourself.”<sup>1</sup>*

“SIR,—Sir Germander Pool, your noble friend and fellow in arms, hath been at this house. I find by their diligent inquiring from me that he hath assured them that he hath much advanced your proceeding by his resignation; but cooled them again with this, that the Lord Spencer pretends in his room. I never feared his nor any man's diligence in that; I feared only your remissness, because you have a fortune that can endure, and a nature that can almost be content to miss. But I had rather you exercised your philosophy and evenness in some things else. He doth not nothing which falls cleanly and harmlessly; but he wrestles better which stands.

“I know you can easily forgive yourself any negligences and slacknesses, but I am glad that you are engaged to so many friends, who either by yourself or fame have knowledge of it. In all the rest of them there is a worthiness, and in me a love which deserves to be satisfied. In this therefore, as you are forward in all things else, be content to do more for your friends than you would for yourself; endeavour it, that is effect it.

“Your very true friend and lover,

“J. DONNE.

“Tuesday.”

Sir Germander Pool had suffered the singular inconvenience of having his nose bitten off in a fray, in March 1613, and it is not unlikely that this disfigurement led to the resignation of which Donne speaks.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

“To the Honour'd Knight Sir ROBERT KER.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I amend to no purpose, nor have any use of this inchoation of health, which I find, except I preserve my room and station in you. I begin to be past hope of dying; and I feel that a little rag of Monte Mayor, which I read last time I was in your chamber, hath wrought prophetically upon me, which is, that Death came so fast towards me that the over-joy of that recovered me. Sir, I measure not my health by my appetite, but only by my ability to come to kiss your hands: which since I cannot hope in the compass of a few days, I beseech you pardon me both these intrusions of this letter and of that within it. And though schoolmen dispute whether a married man dying and being by miracle raised again must be remarried, yet let your friendship (which is a nobler learning) be content to admit me, after this resurrection, to be still that which I was before, and shall ever continue—Your most humble and thankful servant,

“J. DONNE.

“20th March [1614].”

“Monte Mayor” is the Portuguese writer Jorge de Montemôr, who wrote, in Castilian, a pastoral romance, the *Diana Enamorada*, which was read in all parts of Europe, and exercised a strong influence over Sidney, and even over Shakespeare, as later over St. François de Sales.

Donne was now engaged upon a study of the Oriental languages, so far as they were open in his day to a scholar. Spanish literature, too, as we know, was his constant exercise and pastime. But he still hankered after the profession of the law, and doubtless his most serious efforts at this time were made in the direction of obtaining some legal appointment. The letter which next follows<sup>2</sup> is now printed for the first time, and throws a very valuable light upon Donne's temper and avocation at this, fortunately precise, date. To whom it was addressed is not known:—

<sup>1</sup> From *Letters of 1651*.

<sup>2</sup> From the collection of J. H. Anderdon, Esq.

“SIR,—Except demonstrations (and perchance there are very few of them) I find nothing without perplexities. I am grown more sensible of it by busying myself a little in the search of the Eastern tongues, where a perpetual perplexity in the words cannot choose but cast a perplexity upon the things. Even the least of our actions suffer and taste thereof. For this present reclusedness of mine hath thus much perplexity in it, that I should the rather write because of it, since it gives me more than ordinary leisure, and the rather forbear, because it takes from me the knowledge of things worth the writing to you. I dined yesterday on the King’s side at Paul’s, but where there came in so many of the Queen’s kindred that the house was more troubled with them than this kingdom was with the Queen’s kindred, when your ancestress the Lady Gray conquered Edward IV. There was father, mother, two brothers, four sisters, and miserable I; yet there was found time to ask me where you were, and to protest that she did not know you were gone out of town because you were so equal a stranger there, in and out of town.

“I did your commandment with Mr. Johnson; both our interests in him needed not to have been employed in it. There was nothing obnoxious but the very name, and he hath changed that. If upon having read it before to divers, it should be spoken that that person was concerned in it, he sees not how Mr. Holland will be excused in it, for he protests that no hearer but Mr. Holland apprehended it so.

“My Lord of Bedford, I hear, had lately a desperate fall from his horse, and was speechless all Tuesday last; his lady rode away hastily from Twickenham to him, but I hear no more yet of him. And thus long, Sir, whilst I have been talking of others, methinks I have opened a casement to gaze upon passengers which I love not much, though it might seem a recreation to such as who have their houses, that is themselves, so narrow and ill furnished, yet I can be content to look inward upon myself, if for no other object, yet because I find your name and fortunes and contentment in the best room of me, and that no disease or impotency

in my fortune nor my close imprisonment saves from me the dignity of being—Your very affectionate servant,

“JO. DONNE.

“From my Hospital, July 17, 1613.”

The expressions here about the Queen’s kindred are very cryptic. It is as well to point out that the reference cannot possibly be to Queen Anne, whose father and mother had long been dead. I suppose that “the Queen” is simply a form of sportive speech used to designate some lady so known both to Donne and to his correspondent.

The next letter is addressed to George Gerrard’s sister:—

“To Mrs. MARTHA GERRARD.<sup>1</sup>

“MADAME,—Though there be much merit in the favour your brother hath done me in a visit, yet that which doth enrich and perfect it is that he brought you with him; which he doth as well by letting me see how you do, as by giving me occasions and leave to talk with you by this letter; if you have any servant which wishes you better than I, it must be because he is able to put his wishes into a better frame and express them better, and understand proportion and greatness better than I. I am willing to confess my impotency, which is that I know no wish good enough for you; if any do, my advantage is that I can exceed his by adding mine to it. You must not think that I begin to think thus when you begin to hear it by a letter; as sometimes by the changing of the wind, you begin to hear a trumpet, which sounded long before you heard it, so are these thoughts of you familiar and ordinary in me, though they have seldom the help of this conveyance to your knowledge. I am loth to leave, for as long as in any fashion I can have your brother and you here, you make my house a kind of Dorney; but since I cannot stay you here, I will come thither to you, which I do by wrapping up in this paper the heart of—Your most affectionate servant,

“J. DONNE.”

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

Dorney was the seat of the Gerrards in Bucks. The word was misprinted *Dorvey* in 1651.

*“To my best of friends Sir H. G[OOODYER].<sup>1</sup>*

“SIR,—I heard not from you this week, therefore I write more willingly, because it hath in it so much more merit. And I might do it very cheaply, since to convey to you this letter which mine hath the honour to bring, any little letter would serve and be acceptable for that. Because it came not last week I went now to solicit it, and she sent it me next day with some thanks, and some excuse that she knew not me when I was with her. You know I do not easily put myself into those hazards, nor do much brag of my valour now, otherwise than I purposed it for a service to you. The newest thing that I know in the world is my new son, whose mother’s being well takes off from me any new weight upon my fortune.

“I hear in Newgate that Mr. Matthew is dead. The Catholics believe it there, perchance out of a custom of credulity. But the report is close prisoner, for I never met it abroad. This is my third letter, all which I sent by Spelty, whom my boy found at Abington House. I have now two of the best happinesses which could befall me upon me, which are to be a widower and my wife alive, which may make you know that it is but for your ease that this letter is no longer, in this leisure in which (having nothing else to write) I might vary a thousand ways that I am

*“Your very affectionate servant,*

*“J. DONNE.*

*“Monday at night.”*

Mr., afterwards Sir Tobie, Matthew was very dangerously ill in Rome in August 1613, and the report reached England that he was dead; but he recovered, and to his care we owe various important and little-known documents referring to Donne.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of 1651.*

It is now necessary to refer to a subject over which the biographer of Donne would willingly pass in silence, namely, his relations with the infamous Earl of Somerset. This it is impossible for us to ignore, especially in the face of evidence now to be produced of the duration and importance of the favourite's patronage. We could wish, of course, that an instinct could have warned Donne at the outset against this unprincipled man, but to demand such clairvoyance from him would be Quixotic in the extreme. There is no need to tell again in detail a story so familiar as that of the rise and fall of Somerset, but we may review his history rapidly from the exclusive point of view of his relations with Donne. Every one knows that in 1603 a handsome Scottish lad named Robert Ker, who was attached to the household of Donne's friend, Lord Hay, was so lucky as to attract the King's notice by breaking his leg at a tilting-match. An evidence of his original obscurity is found in the fact that no one quite knows when or where Robert Ker was born, but it was probably not later than 1585. James I., as Mr. S. R. Gardiner succinctly puts it, "was attracted by his personal activity and his strong animal spirits." He made Ker his constant companion, provided him with a fortune, and started him on the ladder of nobility.

When the favourite was about four-and-twenty, Sherborne was, by a shameful trick, wrested from the noble Sir Walter Raleigh and given to the young Scotchman, who resold it to the King for £20,000. He was now in a position to hold his own at the English court, and he began to display considerable political gifts of the intriguing order. His influence with his master was thrown into the opposite scale to the House of Commons, which he encouraged James to resist. In the face of much unpopularity among the English peers, the King ventured, on the 25th of March 1611, to raise Ker to a seat in the House of Lords under the title of Viscount Rochester; the new peer was probably under the age of six-and-twenty. The only obstacle now to the final and exclusive power of the Scotch adventurer was the Lord Treasurer; this also was presently removed by the death of Salisbury on the 24th

of May 1612, while Donne was in the Spanish Netherlands. The King determined that no man in future should hold quite the august place which Salisbury had maintained in the State. He would be his own secretary, with Rochester at his elbow to advise him. So domineering became the influence of the favourite that the wildest rumours found credence, and when Prince Henry died there were not a few who were convinced that Rochester had poisoned him.

Such being the position of Rochester in 1612, it is not difficult to understand how glittering an object of envy he must have seemed to those struggling for places at court below him. To be noticed favourably by Rochester was to have found the ear of the King, or at all events to be on the road thither. To Donne, always "attending court fortunes," as he puts it, it was impossible to resist taking advantage of his old acquaintance with Lord Hay, in whose "service" he seems in some dim way to have been included, to arrest the attention of Hay's most prosperous protégé. We possess the letter<sup>1</sup> in which, under cover to Lord Hay, Donne introduced himself to Rochester's notice. It was doubtless written in October 1612.

*"To the Lord of ROCHESTER.*

"MY LORD,—I may justly fear that your Lordship hath never heard of the name which lies at the bottom of this letter; nor could I come to the boldness of presenting it now, without another boldness, of putting his Lordship, who now delivers it, to that office. Yet I have (or flatter myself to have) just excuses of this, and just ground of that ambition. For, having obeyed at last, after much debate within me, the inspirations (as I hope) of the Spirit of God, and resolved to make my profession Divinity; I make account, that I do but tell your Lordship, what God hath told me, which is, that it is in this course, if in any, that my service may be of use to this Church and State. Since then your Lordship's virtues have made you so near the head in the one, and so religious a member of

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

the other, I came to this courage, of thrusting myself thus into your Lordship's presence, both in respect that I was an independent, and disengaged man, towards any other person in this State; and delivered over now (in my resolution) to be a household servant of God. I humbly beseech your Lordship, that since these my purposes are likely to meet quickly a false and unprofitable dignity, which is the envy of others, you will vouchsafe to undertake, or prevent, or disable that, by affording them the true dignity of your just interpretations, and favourable assistance. And to receive into your knowledge so much of the history, and into your protection so much of the endeavours, of your Lordship's most humble and devoted servant."

This is the note in which the previous letter was enclosed.

"*To the Lord Hay.*<sup>1</sup>

"**M**Y **L**ORD,—I have told your Lordship often that I have no virtue but modesty; and I begin to fear that I lose that in saying so often that I have it; at least, if I were full freighted with it before, I find that at this time I make a desperate shipwreck of it. Either the boldness of putting myself by this way of letter into my Lord of Rochester's presence, or the boldness of begging from your Lordship the favour of presenting it, would spend more of that virtue than I have. But since I can strongly hope, out of the general testimonies of his Lordship's true nobleness, that he will allow me this interpretation, that I reserved myself till now, when a resolution of a new course of life and new profession makes me a little more worthy of his knowledge; and that as soon as I had delivered myself over to God, I deliver myself to him, I cannot doubt of your Lordship's pardon for my boldness in using your mediation.

"I did it not, my Lord, without some disputation. But I thought it very unworthy to have sent a first letter to his Lordship by a servant of my own, and to have made

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

it the business of any friend of mine who hath the honour of accesses to him. I thought myself tied by that to have communicated my purposes with him, that person, and so to have fore-acquainted another with that which I desire his Lordship should first know. For I make account that it is in one instant that I tell his and your Lordship that I have brought all my distractions together, and find them in a resolution of making divinity my profession, that I may try whether my poor studies, which have profited me nothing, may profit others in that course; in which also a fortune may either be better made, or, at least, better missed, than in any other. One good fruit of it will be, that my prayers for your Lordship's happiness shall be, in that station, more effectual with God; and that, therein, I shall best show myself to be your Lordship's most humble and thankful servant."

This sudden resolution to take orders in the Church of England was probably met by discouragement from Rochester. At all events, Donne seems to have dropped it as abruptly as he adopted it, for we meet with no further suggestion that he should enter the Church until three years later. Doubtless Rochester's reply, through Hay, was that if Donne wished to serve him, the profession of the law offered more chances of doing so than that of divinity. We may perhaps safely place the next letter some four months later; it shows that Rochester had not ignored the appeal made to him. He had attached Donne to him "by all the titles he could think upon," and had even now gone further, by "buying" him. In what did that transaction consist? To that answer I am afraid there is a somewhat ignominious reply. But first let us read the letter:—

"To the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount of  
ROCHESTER.<sup>1</sup>

"MY MOST HONOURABLE GOOD LORD,—After I was grown to be your Lordship's by all the titles that I could

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

think upon, it hath pleased your Lordship to make another title to me, by buying me. You may have many better bargains in your purchases, but never a better title than to me, nor anything which you may call yours more absolutely and entirely than me. If therefore I appear before your Lordship sometimes in these letters of thankfulness, it may be an excusable boldness, because they are part of your evidences by which you hold me. I know there may be degrees of importunity even in thankfulness; but your Lordship is got above the danger of suffering that from me, or my letters, both because my thankfulness cannot reach to the benefits already received, and because the favour of receiving my letters is a new benefit. And since good divines have made this argument against deniers of the Resurrection, that it is easier for God to unite the principles and elements of our bodies, howsoever they be scattered, than it was at first to create them of nothing, I cannot doubt but that any distractions or diversions in the ways of my hopes will be easier to your Lordship to reunite than it was to create them. Especially since you are already so near perfecting them, that if it agreed with your Lordship's purposes, I should never wish other station than such as might make me still, and only your Lordship's most humble and devoted servant,

J. DONNE."

Rochester was at this moment in want of the acutest legal advice that he could find. He was launched on the frantic intrigue which was to lead to his ultimate ruin. Frances Howard, Countess of Essex, a young woman of two-and-twenty, who combined the vilest temperament with the worst education, had at the close of 1612 begun to stir for a divorce from her husband, the Earl of Essex. Into the circumstances of this disgusting story it is needless that we should enter here. Enough to say that having made life intolerable to Essex, he had left her for three years, and the woman believed that he would allow her, only too gladly, to obtain a declaration of the nullity of their marriage in 1609. Her real object, however, was her desire to marry Rochester, to which her own family, which included

her uncle, Lord Northampton, had easily persuaded the King to consent. All that was wanted was to have the nullity declared. In this juncture it is evident that Rochester turned to Donne with a promise of patronage if he would lend him his talents in the legal proceedings which were inevitable. He evidently expected these to be brief and conclusive, and that his marriage with Frances Howard would immediately follow. In the letter which we give next, Donne seems to meet half-way the suggestion that he should help in the nullity suit, but, what is most extraordinary, he writes as though Rochester had already commissioned him to write the epithalamium on his approaching marriage with a lady who was still legally the wife of another man. In this there was nothing in the slightest degree uncharacteristic of Rochester, but of what could Donne possibly be thinking to entertain such a proposal? Yet if the date "Jan. 19" be not a misprint of the original edition, this interpretation is absolutely forced upon us, since by that day of 1614 everything was long over, nullity, re-marriage, epithalamium, and all. We are not left to conjecture; Donne did engage himself on the nullity suit, and he did write the wedding poem. But let us read this curious letter:—

"*To my worthy friend G. K.*<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—I receive this here that I begin this return, your letter by a servant of Sir G. Greseley, by whom also I hasten this despatch. This needs no enlargement, since it hath the honour to convey one from Mr. Gerrard. But though by telling me it was a bold letter, I had leave to open it, and that I have a little itch to make some animadversions and criticisms upon it (as that there is a cypher too much in the sum of the King's debts, and such like), yet since my eyes do easily fall back to their distemper, and that I am this night to sup at Sir Ar. Ingram's, I had rather forfeit their little strength at his supper than with writing such impertinencies; the best spending them is upon the rest of

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

your letter, to which, Sir, I can only say in general that some appearances have been here of some treatise concerning this nullity, which are said to proceed from Geneva, but are believed to have been done within doors, by encouragements of some whose names I will not commit to this letter.

“ My poor study having lain that way, it may prove possible that my weak assistance may be of use in this matter in a more serious fashion than an epithalamium. This made me therefore abstinent in that kind ; yet, by my troth, I think I shall not escape. I deprehend in myself more than an alacrity, a vehemency to do service to that company, and so I may find reason to make rhyme. If it be done, I see not how I can admit that circuit of sending them to you to be sent hither ; that seems a kind of praying to saints, to whom God must tell first that such a man prays to them to pray to Him. So that I shall lose the honour of that conveyance, but for recompense you shall escape the danger of approving it. My next letter shall say more of this. This shall end with delivering you the remembrance of my Lady Bartlett, who is present at the sealing hereof.

“ Your very true and affectionate servant,

“ J. DONNE.

“ Jan. 19 [1613].

“ Which name, when there is any empty corner in your discourse with that noble lady at Ashby, I humbly beseech you to present to her as one more devoted to her service than perchance you will say.”

The lady at Ashby was the Lord-Keeper’s third wife, Alice, widow of Ferdinand, fifth Earl of Derby ; a lifelong friend of Donne, she survived until 1636.

It is pleasant to be able to turn for a few moments to happier themes and a purer atmosphere. On Good Friday, 1613, Donne wrote his poem “ Riding Westward ” as he was journeying from Polesworth, where he had visited Sir Henry Goodyer, on his road to Montgomery Castle and its delightful inmates, Magdalen Herbert and her son Sir Edward. The castle had been seized by James I. in 1607,

and transferred to another branch of the family, that of Philip Herbert, whom in 1605 the King had created Earl of Montgomery; it was he who a quarter of a century later became fourth Earl of Pembroke. Philip Herbert grew tired of living in Wales, and various duties called him more and more to England. When, therefore, his cousin Sir Edward offered to buy back the ancestral home, he was happy to sell it for £500. The sale did not take place until July 1613; and, if the date of Donne's visit is correctly reported, Mrs. Herbert was the inhabitant of the Castle before she was actually the owner. In any case, it is probable that Donne was among the earliest visitors to Mrs. Herbert and her son in their re-established home. It was at Montgomery Castle, and (I do not question) at this very time, that Donne wrote the singularly beautiful poem of "The Primrose"—

"Upon this primrose hill,  
Where, if heaven would distil  
A shower of rain, each several drop might go  
To its own primrose, and grow manna so ;  
And where their form and their infinity  
Make a terrestrial galaxy,  
As the small stars do in the sky ;  
I walk to find a true love ; and I see  
That 'tis not a mere woman, that is she,  
But must or more or less than woman be."

The whole is a mystical celebration of the beauty, dignity, and intelligence of Magdalen Herbert, that admirable friend who takes so high a place in the gallery of Donne's noble women. When this poem, which must have been well known to George Herbert, and was directly imitated by him, was written in his mother's praise, the future author of the *Temple* was just twenty years of age, and had newly taken his degree at Trinity College, Cambridge.

"To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER.<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—I had rather like the first best; not only because it is cleanlier, but because it reflects least upon the other

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

party, which, in all jest and earnest, in this affair, I wish avoided. If my muse were only out of fashion, and but wounded and maimed like free-will in the Roman Church, I should adventure to put her to an epithalamium. But since she is dead, like free-will in our Church, I have not so much muse left as to lament her loss. Perchance this business may produce occasions, wherein I may express my opinion of it, in a more serious manner. Which I speak neither upon any apparent conjecture, nor upon any over-valuing of my abilities, but out of a general readiness and alacrity to be serviceable and grateful in any kind. In both which poor virtues of mine, none can pretend a more primary interest than you may in your humble and affectionate servant,

J. DONNE."

There existed, among the Ashburnham MSS., a compendium of the whole course of proceeding in the nullity of the Earl of Essex and the Lady Frances Howard, drawn up by Donne in the course of 1613. It is not for us to venture to condemn his judgment, but I confess that it would be a satisfaction to us to think of the future Dean of St. Paul's as less intimately acquainted than he must have been with the early details of this shocking story,<sup>1</sup> and less indulgent in condoning them. The next letter doubtless refers also to dealings with Rochester. The nullity suit proved to be anything but easy to obtain; in the spring of 1613 Mary Woods produced her sinister accusation that Lady Essex had tried to poison her husband. The Howards withdrew in alarm, and Archbishop Abbot's conscience refused to be satisfied. The divorce, however, though wearily delayed, was only postponed. One of Donne's friends, the famous Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, was one of the members of the Commission which met in May to try the case. He was unfavourable to the divorce, and he remained silent throughout the proceedings, but he did not oppose the ultimate result. It is not extravagant to conjecture that, conscious as he was of Donne's acumen, he was struck by the arguments brought forward in favour of the declara-

<sup>1</sup> See Eighth Report of the Hist. MSS. Comm., Appendix 22a, part iii.

tion of nullity by Donne in a paper which is still in existence.<sup>1</sup>

In judging men like Lancelot Andrewes and Donne, it is highly important to bear in mind that the cup of Frances Howard's wickedness was very far indeed from being full in 1613. Those who examined her case could hardly fail to see in her a callous, cruel, and indelicate woman; but the faults of her temper had not, as yet, publicly blossomed forth into crimes, and the worst charges brought against her before her marriage with Rochester were capable of being condoned or denied. But when every excuse has been made, it is difficult not to yield to Dean Church's opinion that all the Jacobean churchmen were subjected to a sort of fate, which obliged them to become base at least once in their lives.

We now print some miscellaneous letters of this period. They testify to Donne's failing health and neurotic condition; his eyes, in particular, were, for several months, to give him great suffering and anxiety. First of all, a letter to Rochester evidently belongs to the summer of 1613.

*“To the Lord of ROCHESTER.”<sup>2</sup>*

“MY MOST HONOURED LORD,—I prosper too fast in your Lordship's favour, that I am already come to the honour of suffering somewhat for it; for this abstinence from putting myself into your Lordship's presence (which I make account that I do in obedience of your purposes) is so much more than a punishment to me, that it hath some degrees of a civil martyrdom; but as God Himself, so they whom He hath made stewards of His benefits upon earth, dispenses and confers them, as well by Providence, as by presence. So that with as much confidence, as humility, I do rest myself upon your gracious inclinations towards me, and think myself much safer in that, than in the possession of any place. For when by possession, I must come to exercise mine own poor abilities, I shall not be upon so good ground as now, when I subsist only by your grace, yet I

<sup>1</sup> Harl. MSS. 39, fol. 416.

<sup>2</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

presume your Lordship will allow me to tell you, that I understand that S[ir] H[enry] W[otton] hath some design upon one of these places, whereof your Lordship did me that favour to speak for a nephew of his, Mr. M. But as they are now supplied, I dare be sure that there is room for none, but one of your making; this day and not before I came to the sight of the book, which your Lordship mentioned to me; but because I know that the Jesuits at Louvain are in hand with an answer expressly to my whole book, I forbear yet to take knowledge of this. Which I am bold to tell your Lordship, lest in such place, such misconceiving, might disadvantage me much. I should be thought to forsake, either mine own poor reputation, or the safest cause in the world. But lest I should spend all your Lordship's favour in pardons, I will take no more of your time, neither from yourself, nor the public, with these impertinencies of—Your Lordship's, &c."

*"To Yourself [GEORGE GERRARD]."*<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—If I shall never be able to do you any real service, yet you may make this profit of me, that you be hereafter more cautious in receiving into your knowledge persons so useless and importune. But before you come to so perfect a knowledge of me as to abandon me, go forward in your favours to me so far as to deliver this letter according to the address. I think I should not come nearer his presence than by a letter; and I am sure I would come no other way but by you. Be you therefore pleased by these noble favours to me, to continue in me the comfort which I have in being—Your very humble and thankful servant,

J. DONNE.

"Drury House, 23rd Sept. [1613]."

*"To my honoured friend Master GEORGE GERRARD."*<sup>2</sup>

"SIR,—Your letter was the more welcome to me because it brought your commandment with it, of sending

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

you perfumes ; for it is a service somewhat like a sacrifice. But yet your commandment surprised me, when neither I had enough to send, nor had means to recover more ; that lady being out of town which gave them me. But, Sir, if I had ten millions I could send you no more than I do ; for I send all.

“ If any good occasion present itself to you to send to my Lord Clifford, spare my name a room there where you offer him most of your service. I dare contend with you that you cannot exceed me in desiring to serve him. It is a better office from me to you that I go to bed, than that I write a longer letter. For if I do mine eyes a little more injury, I shall lose the honour of seeing you at Michaelmas ; for by my troth I am almost blind : you may be content to believe that I am always disposed to your service, without exception of any time, since now just at midnight, when it is both day and night, and neither, I tell you that I am

“ Your affectionate friend and servant,

“ J. DONNE.”

Lord Clifford at this time was Henry, afterwards fifth Earl of Cumberland ; born in 1591, he had recently married Lord Salisbury's only daughter.

“ To Sir G. B.<sup>1</sup>

“ SIR,—It is one of my blind meditations to think what a miserable defeat it would be to all these preparations of bravery if my infirmity should overtake others ; for, I am at least half-blind, my windows are all as full of glasses of waters as any mountebank's stall. This messenger makes haste, I thank him for it ; therefore I only send you this letter, which was sent to me about three days past, and my promise to distribute your other letters, according to your addresses, as fast as my monsieur can do it ; for, for any personal service you must be content at this time to pardon—Your affectionate servant,

“ J. DONNE.

“ December 23 [1613].”

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

The precious epithalamium was used at last. On the 26th of December 1613 Lord Rochester and Lady Frances Howard were ostentatiously married, the bride with her hair flowing down her shoulders, as a virgin. Three months earlier Rochester's friend, Sir Thomas Overbury, had died in the Tower in agonies "to satiate the implacable malice of that cruel murderer," and it is hardly possible for the most lenient of historians to doubt that Rochester shared the guilt of the woman who had infatuated him. "Blest pair of swans," Donne styles them in the extremely disconcerting Eclogue which he dedicates to their disgraceful nuptials. It is very difficult to approach this poem without a strong feeling of repulsion. If, however, we forget the occasion for which it was composed, it may be read with considerable pleasure. It consists of two parts. The epithalamium proper, written to order several months before, is placed in a pastoral setting which bears every evidence of having been composed just before the wedding. In this a certain Allophanes, finding Idios in the country at Christmas time, reprehends his absence from Court at the marriage of the Earl of Somerset, for to that rank Rochester had a few weeks before been advanced. It is to be noted that the fact of the nuptial song having been written before the event is curiously betrayed by a speech of Allophanes, who introduces it as a "sacrifice" prepared beforehand, although, of course,

"not made  
Either the Court or men's hearts to invade."

Here is an ingenious description of a winter landscape—

"What delicacy can in fields appear  
Whilst Flora herself doth a frieze jerkin wear?  
Whilst winds do all the trees and hedges strip  
Of leaves, to furnish rods enough to whip  
Thy madness from thee, and all springs by frost  
Have taken cold, and their sweet murmurs lost!"

Donne's ideas at this time were greatly set upon court functions, and he expatiates in graceful conceits

about the charms of a life among the smiling faces of the great—

“ At every glance, a constellation flies,  
And sows the court with stars, and doth present,  
In light and power, the all-eyed firmament.  
First her eyes kindle other ladies' eyes,  
Then from their beams their jewels' lustres rise,  
And from their jewels torches do take fire,  
And all is warmth, and light, and good desire.”

The epithalamium itself is one of Donne's happiest efforts in this direction—rich, ingenious, and virile. A single strophe will give an impression of the form in which it is cast; this describes the progress of the bride and bridegroom to chapel—

“ Now from your easts you issue forth, and we,—  
As men, which thro' a cypress see  
The rising sun, do think it two,  
So, as you go to church,—do think of you;  
But that veil being gone,  
By the church-rites you are from thenceforth one.  
The church triumphant made this match before,  
And now the militant doth strive no more.  
Then, reverend Priest, who God's recorder art,  
Do, from His dictates, to these two impart  
All blessings which are seen or thought, by angel's eye or heart.”

The song closes as follows—

“ Now, as, in Tullia's tomb, one lamp burn'd clear,  
Unchanged for fifteen hundred year,  
May these love-lamps we here enshrine,  
In warmth, light, lasting, equal the divine.  
Fire ever doth aspire,  
And makes all like itself, turns all to fire,  
But ends in ashes; which these cannot do,  
For neither of these is fuel, but fire too.  
This is joy's bonfire, then, where love's strong arts  
Make of so noble individual parts  
One fire of four inflaming eyes, and of two loving hearts.”

By what a strange blindness the poets were afflicted! On the same winter morning Ben Jonson handed to “virtuous Somerset” a copy of verses even more enthusi-

astic than those of Donne. What the feelings of these canorous persons must have been when the Overbury revelations so promptly followed, it is not easy to conceive.

Through the year 1614, Donne, much afflicted by sickness and by the deaths of successive children, waited impatiently for Somerset to carry out his promises of reward for the services which Donne had so lavishly volunteered. It is probable that some temporary payment was made, but certainly the poet looked out in vain for any definite appointment. Through this dolorous year we may follow him mainly in the melancholy and accidental letters which have come down to us, letters which reflect the distractions of his spirit. Of the first of these the address has been lost, and it is particularly difficult to comprehend; it is now for the first time published.<sup>1</sup> The Rev. William Hunt suggests to me that this, like the preceding and the next letter, was addressed to "Sir G. B." and that he was a cadet of the Brydges family.

"SIR,—As I have returned back to you the indictment, so do I the evidence, this parcel of Mr. Gerrard's letter, and now I appeal to yourself whether you had from thence any ground to imagine such an openness in me, and whether I be not so thoroughly clear that even he is clear too. I perceive that he being present with me at the receipt of some of your letters, and finding upon his questioning of me that sometimes there was no mention of the receipt of his letters, he grew jealous of their miscarriage; and so, Sir, I think there is more gloss upon the letter than it was worth, and you and I stand well towards one another.

"I carried the letter which was addressed to my Lord Chandos, but I found him not; he was expected to come to town this evening, therefore I wrote to his Lordship and enclosed that letter, and left them there to await his return. He understands by mine that I have commodity of sending back to-morrow, and therefore perchance may send hither

<sup>1</sup> From the collection of J. H. Anderdon, Esq.

before the footman call for this packet. All the letters which I send you herewith (except only that from Sir Tho. Roe) came to my hands within an hour after I had sent away last Tuesday by the carrier of the Rose, which brought a letter from my Lord Chandos.

“If by this delay in my hands either of those letters have lost any of their virtue, you may put it upon the score of my ill-fortunes, but not of my faults. I presume Mr. Gerrard’s letter hath left me nothing to say, except I speak of things after his date. That which is most remarkable fell out yesterday, for Sir Stephen Proctor’s great cause concerning my Lord of Northampton being yesterday heard in the Star Chamber, where we thought to see him crushed, the opinions were equal, and the Chancellor’s opinion on the discharging side; so was the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the two bishops, and they which condemned him (as I think) were all judges at law.

“There is come out a most poetical proclamation against duels, with a book annexed to it for direction in such accidents, which I would have sent you, but that it is too big. And as they pride thereby that we shall not think of killing one another, so I must pride by your favour that you spend none of your thoughts upon self-killing, for I must entreat you to forbear that book till I have the honour to be with you. The King at his going away left the debatements of the Parliament to his Council, who have resolved nothing therein as yet, so that the assurance thereof is not so vehement as it was. It is taken ill, though it be but mistaken that certain men (whom they call undertakers) should presume either to understand the house before it sit, or to incline it then, and this rumour beforehand, which must impeach, if it do not defeat their purposes at last. I know nothing else that other men are not likely to know more profitably than I, and to deliver to you more credibly; therefore I here, Sir, kiss your hand, and continue to you the entire possession of

“Your poor and affectionate servant,

“JO. DONNE.

“Sat. 12 Feb. 1613[4].”

*"To Sir G. B.<sup>1</sup>*

"SIR,—Between the time of making up my other letters, and the hour that your man limited me to call for them, came to my house another packet directed to him; for by this time the carrier is as wise as his horse, to go to the house that he hath used to go. I found liberty in the superscription to open, and so I did; but for that part which concerns him I must attend his coming hither, for I know not where to seek him; and besides, I have enough to say for that part which concerns myself.

"Sir, even in the letter itself to me I deprehend much inclination to chide me, and it is but out of your habit of good language that you spare me. So little occasion as that postscript of mine could not bring you so near to it, if nothing else were mistaken, which (so God help me) was so little that I remember not what it was, and I would no more hear again what I write in an officious letter than what I said at a drunken supper. I had no purpose to exercise your diligence in presenting my name to that lady, but either I did, or should have said that I writ only to fill up any empty corner in your discourse. So, Sir, the reading of the letter was a kind of travail to me, but when I came to the paper enclosed I was brought to bed of a monster.

"To express myself vehemently quickly, I must say that I can scarce think that you have read Mr. Gerrard's letter rightly, therefore I send you back your own again. I will not protest against my being such a knave, for no man shall have that from me, if he expect it, but I will protest against my being such a fool as to depose anything in him with hope of locking it up, and against that lowness of seeking reputation by so poor a way. I am not so sorry that I am a narrow man, as that for all the narrowness you have not seen through me yet, nor known me perfectly; for I might think by this (if I had not other testimony) that I have been little in your contemplation. Sixteen

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

letters from Mr. Gerrard could not (I think) persuade a Middlesex jury of so much dishonesty in

“Your true servant,

[Feb. 1614?]

“J. DONNE.”

“*To the Honourable Sir R[OBERT] D[RURY].*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I gave no answer to the letter I received from you upon Tuesday, both because I had in it no other commandment by it but to deliver your letter therein, which I did, and because that letter found me under very much sadness, which (according to the proportion of ills that fall upon me) is since also increased, so that I had not written now, if I had been sure to have been better able to write next week, which I have not much appearance of; yet there was committed to my disposition (that is, left at my house in my absence) a letter from Sir W. Lover, but it was some hours after all possibility of sending it by the carrier, so that Mr. W. Stanhope giving me the honour of a visit at that time, and being instantly to depart, for your parts, did me the favour to undertake the delivery of it to you.

“With me, Sir, it is thus, there is not one person (besides myself) in my house well. I have already lost half a child, and with that mischance of hers, my wife fallen into an indisposition, which would afflict her much, but that the sickness of her children stupefies her; of one of which, in good faith, I have not much hope. This meets a fortune so ill-provided for physic and such relief, that if God should ease us with burials, I know not well how to perform even that. I flatter myself in this, that I am dying too; nor can I truly die faster, by any waste, than by loss of children.

“But, Sir, I will mingle no more of my sadness to you, but will a little recompense it, by telling you that my Lord Harrington, of whom a few days since they were doubtful, is so well recovered that now they know all his disease to be the pox and measles mingled. This I heard yester-

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

day; for I have not been there yet. I came as near importunity as I could for an answer from Essex House, but this was all, that he should see you shortly himself.

“Your servant,

“J. DONNE.

“I cannot tell you so much, as you tell me, of anything from my Lord of Som[erset] since the epithalamium, for I heard nothing.”

“To Sir H[ENRY] G[OODFYER].<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I receive this 14th your letter of the 10th, yet I am not come to an understanding how these carriers keep days; for I would fain think that the letters which I sent upon Thursday last might have given you such an account of the state of my family, that you needed not have asked by this. But, Sir, it hath pleased God to add thus much to my affliction, that my wife hath now confessed herself to be extremely sick; she hath held out thus long to assist me, but is now overturned, and here we be in two beds, or graves; so that God hath marked out a great many of us, but taken none yet. I have passed ten days without taking anything; so that I think no man can live more thriftily. I have purged and vexed my body much since I wrote to you, and this day I have missed my fit; and this is the first time that I could discern any intermission.

“This is enough, the rest I will spend upon the parts of your letter; your letter at Paul’s is delivered. In the history of that remove, this only perchance may be news to you, that Mr. Alabaster hath got of the King the Dean’s best living, worth above £300, which the Dean had good hope to have held a while.

“Of that which you wrote concerning a book of the nullity, I have heard no syllable any other way. If you have received it by good hands, I believe it with you; otherwise the report is naturally very incredible. Though the answering of it be a work for some, both of better

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

abilities really, and in common reputation also, yet I was like enough to have had some knowledge thereof.

“ You mention again something which it seems you are not willing I should understand of my Lady Huntington; some of your former letters have spoken of some other former letters (which I never saw), which speak of the matter as of a history and thing done; and these later letters speak of it prophetically, as of a future contingent. I am glad the often remembrance of it gives me often occasion of thankfulness to her, for retaining me in her memory, and of professing myself in my end, and ways, her most humble servant.

“ For your Parliament business, I should be very sorry, if you came not up, because I presume you had supposed many businesses to have been done at that time; but in the ways wherein you have gone, I protest I am diffident. For first, for that Lord whom you solicited by letters through me, I tell you with the whispering of a secret, but the confidence of a friend, that you will be deceived whensoever you think that he should take any delight in doing you a courtesy. And I am afraid, the true heartiness of the other noble gentleman, Mr. Howard, will be of small use in this particular, if he have but solicited my Lord his father to reserve a blank for his friend, for my Lord hath suffered more denials, even in places where he sent names, than could have been feared. Besides Mr. Howard hath not written to his father therein, but to Mr. Woodward, who perceiving those letters to be written, before his purpose of being Knight for the shire, thinks these letters extinguished. You made me offer so long since of a place (it was when you wrote into the west), yet I could think it no merit to have offered you one since, otherwise it hath been since in my power, for since the Master of the Rolls provided me one, Sir Edward Herbert, who makes haste away, made me a present of his; and I have had a third offer.

“ The business of your last week’s letter concerning the widow, is not a subject for a feverous man’s consideration. Therefore I only send you back those letters which you

sent; and ask you leave to make this which I am fain to call my good day, so much truly good, as to spend the rest of it with Dr. Layfield, who is, upon my summons, at this hour come to me. My physicians have made me afraid that this disease will work into my head, and so put me into lightnesses, therefore I am desirous that I be understood before any such danger overtake me.

“Your true poor servant,

“J. DONNE.

“14th March [1614].”

The St. Paul's living given to the Rev. William Alabaster, the poet of *Roxana*, was Tharfield, in Herts.

It is somewhat surprising that Donne, who was willing to accept a much less lucrative and honourable post, should have dreamed of occupying so prominent an office as that of Ambassador to Venice. But he evidently considered that Somerset, if he chose, could give this to him with as much ease as Salisbury had given it to Sir Dudley Carleton in 1610. Curiously enough, in applying for Venice, Donne was unconsciously poaching in the preserve of his own particular friend, since Sir Henry Wotton had long wished for this embassy. Neither he nor Carleton was happy, and the former was as eager to take up his residence in Venice as the latter was to escape from it. Carleton “longed for the free air of a Protestant country,” and two years after this uncouth application of Donne's, Wotton having vacated the embassy of The Hague, Carleton was transferred to it, and Wotton appointed to Venice. Donne had a great desire to see Venice, and we shall have to record another disappointment of this wish. He would probably have been as much at home in that city as anywhere in Europe.

“To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I sought you yesterday with a purpose of accomplishing my health by the honour of kissing your

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

hands. But I find by my going abroad, that as the first Christians were forced to admit some Jewish ceremonies, only to bury the synagogue with honour, so my fever will have so much reverence and respect as that I must keep sometimes at home. I must therefore be bold to put you to the pain of considering me.

“ If therefore my Lord upon your delivery of my last letter said nothing to you of the purpose thereof, let me tell you now that it was, that in obedience of his commandment, to acquaint him with anything which might advantage me, I was bold to present that which I heard, which was that Sir D. Carleton was likely to be removed from Venice to the States; of which if my Lord said nothing to you, I beseech you add thus much to your many other favours, to entreat my Lord at his best commodity to afford me the favour of speaking with him.

“ But if he have already opened himself so far to you as that you may take knowledge thereof to him, then you may ease him of that trouble of giving me an audience, by troubling yourself thus much more, as to tell him in my behalf, and from me, that though Sir D. Carleton be not removed, yet that place with the States lying open, there is a fair field of exercising his favour towards me, and of constituting a fortune to me, and (that which is more) of a means for me to do him particular services. And, Sir, as I do thoroughly submit the end and effect of all projects to his Lordship’s will, so do I this beginning thereof, to your advice and counsel, if you think me capable of it; as, for your own sake, I beseech you to do, since you have admitted me for

“ Your humble servant,

“ J. DONNE.”

“ *To the Earl of SOMERSET.*<sup>1</sup>

“ MY MOST HONOURED LORD,—Since your Lordship will not let me die, but have by your favour of sending to me so much prevailed against a vehement fever, that I am

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

now in good degrees of convalescence, I was desirous that my first sacrifice to any person in this world for my beginning of health should be to your Lordship, that I might acknowledge that, as ever since I had the happiness to be in your Lordship's sight, I have lived upon your bread; so I owe unto your Lordship now all the means of my recovery, and my health itself: so must all the rest of my life and means be a debt to your Lordship, from whom, since I received a commandment, so much to assist myself, as to present to your Lordship whatsoever to appear to me likely to advantage me, and ease your Lordship.

"I am now bold, in obedience of that commandment, to tell your Lordship, that that is told me, that Sir D[udley] C[arleton] is likely to be removed from Venice to the States. If your Lordship have no particular determination upon that place, nor upon me, I humbly beseech your Lordship to pardon me the boldness of asking you whether I may not be sent thither; all the substance and all the circumstances of this I most humbly submit to your Lordship, with a protestation as true as if I had made it six days since, when I thought myself very near an end, that I had rather be anything that arises out of your Lordship than any proposition of mine; and that I have been in possession of my farthest ambitions ever since I had the dignity of being your most, &c."

"*To the Earl of SOMERSET.*<sup>1</sup>

"It is now somewhat more than a year since I took the boldness to make my purpose of professing divinity known to your Lordship, as to a person whom God had made so great an instrument of His providence in this kingdom, as that nothing in it should be done without your knowledge, your Lordship exercised upon me then many of your virtues, for besides, that by your bounty I have lived ever since, it hath been through your Lordship's advice and inspiration of new hopes into me that I have lived cheerfully. By this time, perchance, your Lordship may have

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

discerned that the malignity of my ill-fortune may infect your good, and that by some impressions in your Lordship I may be incapable of the favours which your Lordship had purposed to me. I had rather perish than be such a rub in your fortune, or that through me your history should have one example of having missed what you desired; I humbly therefore beg of your Lordship that after you shall have been pleased to admit into your memory that I am now a year older, broken with some sickness, and in the same degrees of honesty as I was, your Lordship will afford me one commandment, and bid me either hope for this business in your Lordship's hand, or else pursue my first purpose or abandon all; for as I cannot live without your favour, so I cannot die without your leave; because even by dying I should steal from you one who is by his own devotions and your purchase your Lordship's most humble and thankful servant."

As in this next letter Donne particularly vaunts his evil heresy, so distressing to his biographer, that one should never date one's correspondence, to give a conjectural year and month to this piece of his writing would be more than usually idle. We may, however, recollect that Lady Bedford's father, John Harington, first Lord Harington of Exton, died on the 24th of August 1613, while the brother here mentioned, John, second Lord Harington, only survived him a few months:—

“*To the Countess of BEDFORD.*<sup>1</sup>

“MADAM,—Amongst many other dignities which this letter hath by being received and seen by you, it is not the least that it was prophesied of before it was born, for your brother told you in his letter that I had written; he did me much honour both in advancing my truth so far as to call a promise an act already done, and to provide me a means of doing him a service in this act, which is but doing right to myself; for by this performance of mine own word I have also justified that part of his letter which concerned

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651.*

me, and it had been a double guiltiness in me to have made him guilty towards you. It makes no difference that this came not the same day, nor bears the same date as his; for though in inheritances and worldly possessions we consider the dates of evidences, yet in letters, by which we deliver over our affections and assurances of friendship, and the best faculties of our souls, times and days cannot have interest nor be considerable, because that which passes by them is eternal, and out of the measure of time. Because therefore it is the office of this letter to convey my best wishes, and all the effects of a noble love unto you (which are the best fruits that so poor a soil, as my poor soul is, can produce), you may be pleased to allow the letter thus much of the soul's privilege as to exempt it from straitness of hours, or any measure of times, and so believe it came then. And for my part, I shall make it so like my soul, that as that affection, of which it is the messenger, begun in me without my knowing when, any more than I know when my soul began; so it shall continue as long as that.

—Your most affectionate friend and servant,

“ J. D.”

Lord Harington went abroad after his father's death, and travelled in France and Italy. He was taken ill, as was supposed from the effects of poison, but reached his sister's house at Twickenham, where he died on the 27th of February 1614. He was a most amiable and accomplished young man, from whom great things were expected. With him the barony became extinct, and the larger part of his estates passed to his sister Lucy, Countess of Bedford. To this fact Donne refers in his next letter, in which he enclosed a long poem he had written, “Obsequies of the Lord Harington” :—

“ *To the Countess of BEDFORD.*<sup>1</sup>

“ **MADAM**,—I have learned it, by those laws wherein I am a little conversant, that he which bestows any cost

<sup>1</sup> MS. copy in the British Museum.

upon the dead, obliges him which is dead, but not the heir; I do not therefore send this paper to your Ladyship that you should thank me for it, or think that I thank you in it; your favours and benefits to me are so much above my merits, that they are even above my gratitude, if that were to be judged by words, which must express it.

“But, Madam, since your noble brother’s fortune being yours, the evidences concerning it are yours; so, his virtue being yours, the evidences concerning that belong also to you, of which by your acceptance this may be one piece, in which quality I humbly present it, and as a testimony how entirely your family possesseth

“Your Ladyship’s most humble  
and thankful servant,  
“JOHN DONNE.”

The “Obsequies” is the longest of Donne’s minor funeral poems, and it is one of the best. The tone of panegyric is not so strained as to give us any doubt of the poet’s sincerity of feeling. For Lord Harington, whom he had known from that nobleman’s boyhood, he had a great esteem and affection. There was something genuinely affecting in this untimely death, at the age of twenty-two, in undeserved suffering, of a young man so gifted, so promising, and so attractive. The opening address is in Donne’s gravest and weightiest metaphysical manner—

“ Fair soul, which wast, not only as all souls be,  
Then when thou wast infused, harmony,  
But didst continue so; and now dost bear  
A part in God’s great organ, this whole sphere,—  
If, looking up to God, or down to us,  
Thou find that any way is pervious  
’Twixt heaven and earth, and that men’s actions do  
Come to your knowledge, and affections too,  
See, and with joy, me to that good degree  
Of goodness grown, that I can study thee,  
And by these meditatiōns refined,  
Can unapparel and enlarge my mind,  
And so can make, by this soft ecstasy,  
This place a map of heaven, myself of thee.”

This is as full of ingenuity as of music, both indeed in a class more popular in the seventeenth than in the nineteenth century. But it is easy to see how directly Cowley was influenced by this movement of verse and of fancy when he came to write his immortal elegy on Crashaw. Donne proceeds, with a cleverness sometimes forced to the peril of his imagination, for 260 nervous lines, and closes with a rash vow to write poetry no more—

“ Do not, fair soul, this sacrifice refuse  
That in thy grave I do inter my Muse,  
Which, by my grief, great as thy worth, being cast  
Behindhand, yet hath spoke, and spoke her last.”

But poets' vows are like those of lovers. He was now over forty years of age, and doubtless the desire to write poetry invaded him less and less often. But he had no real intention of burying his Muse in Lord Harington's tomb, although he might in future choose to dedicate it to graver and graver uses.

In the next letter he refers to the death of his seventh child, Mary Donne, who was buried at St. Clement Danes on the 18th of May 1614; she was in her fourth year:—

“ *To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER.*<sup>1</sup>

“ SIR,—Perchance others may have told you, that I am relapsed into my fever; but that which I must entreat you to condole with me, is that I am relapsed into good degrees of health; your cause of sorrow for that is, that you are likely to be the more troubled with such an impertinency, as I am; and mine is, that I am fallen from fair hopes, of ending all; yet I have scaped no better cheap, than that I have paid death one of my children for my ransom. Because I loved it well, I make account that I dignify the memory of it, by mentioning of it to you, else I should not be so homely. Impute this brevity of writing to you upon no subject to my sickness, in which men use to talk idly; but my profession of desiring to be retained in your

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

memory, impute to your own virtues, which have wrought so much upon your humble servant, JOHN DONNE."

[*May 1614.*]

The next letters, addressed to his brother-in-law, have never, I believe, been printed. They present us with some curious particulars, and shows how entirely vague Donne still was, so late as the end of July 1614, as to his future.

"*To Sir ROBERT MORE.*<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—Our predecessors were never so conquered by the Danes as I am at this time, for their coming have put my little court business out of the way and dispossessed me of so near hopes as lacked little of possession. I must confess my weakness in this behalf; no man attends court fortunes with more impatience than I do. I esteem nothing more inexcusable, than to attend them chargeably, nor any expense so chargeable, as that of time. I am so angry at their coming, that I have not so much as inquired why they came. But they are even with me; for, in truth, they came for nothing. Statesmen who can find matter of state in any wrinkle in the King's socks, think that he came for the business of Cleves, but whether for his brother Saxon, or his cousin Brandenburg, I do not hear that he can tell. And the Low Country men this last year did him such an affront, at his great custom-place, the Sondt, that some think he comes to understand our King's disposition in your business, if he shall go about to right himself upon them. Others think he came to correct our enormity of yellow bands, by presenting as many, as blue. For my particular opinion, I think he came to defeat me, and retard my business. He came upon Friday, and he goes upon Monday; and these two terms' limit are his history; for he doth nothing between. He hath brought with him his Chancellor and his Admiral, and is otherwise well attended. He shipped one hundred horse, but sent

<sup>1</sup> From the Loseley MSS.

them back after he had been a day at sea. He pretended to go into Germany; but after he was at sea, he discovered his purpose, and accordingly left a Commission for the Government, to be opened after he had been certain days away.

“The rest of his history you may find, I think, in some part of *Amadis the Gaul*, at your leisure. I will not contribute so much to mine own ill-fortune, nor join with her in a treason against myself, so much as to be absent now, when my absence may give perchance occasion, perchance excuse to others of slackness in my business; therefore I have neglected my pleasure, and the little circumstance of my health (for in good faith, my life itself is no great circumstance to me), which I intended by going into the country. Therefore, Sir, I send back your horse, in as good case, as so long rest in the Covent Garden can make him. If I find it necessary to go, I will be bold to ask you by an express messenger again whether you can spare him then or no; your poor sister remembers her love to yourself and all your company; so do I, Sir, who am ever

“Yours to be commanded,

“J. DONNE.

At my poor hospital,  
28th July 1614.”

“To Sir ROBERT MORE.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—Since I had no other thing in contemplation when I purposed this journey than my health, methinks it is a kind of physic to be so long about that, and I grow weary of physic quickly. I have therefore put off that purpose, at least till the King come into these parts. If your horse, which I return by this carrier of Guildford, have not found as good salads in our Covent Garden as he should at Loseley, yet I believe he hath had more ease than he should have had there.

“We are condemned to this desert of London for all this summer, for it is company, not houses, which distin-

<sup>1</sup> From the Loseley MSS.

guishes between cities and deserts. When I begin to apprehend that, even to myself, who can relieve myself upon books, solitariness was a little burdenous, I believe it would be much more so to my wife, if she were left alone. So much company, therefore, as I am, she shall not want; and we had not one another at so cheap a rate, as that we should ever be weary of one another.

“Sir, when these places afford anything worth your knowledge, I shall be your referendary. Now my errand is only to deliver my thanks and services, accompanied with your poor sister’s, to yourself and all your good company.

“Yours ever to be commanded,

“J. DONNE.

“10th August 1614.

“I pray, Sir, give this note enclosed to my lady your mother; it is of some parcels which she commanded my wife to buy for her, which are sent down at this time by the carrier.

“To the right worshipful Sir Robert More,  
Knight, at Lothersley.”

“To my worthy and honoured friend Mr. GEORGE  
GERRARD.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I am sorry if your care of me have made you importune to anybody else; yet I cannot be very sorry, because it gives new testimonies of your favour to me, of which I shall ever be very glad and (that which is my only virtue) thankful: so desperate fortunes as mine may well make friends loth to do courtesies, because an inability in deserving or requiting takes from them the honour of having done a courtesy, and leaves it but the poor name of an alms; and alms may be given in easier proportions, and more meritoriously. But, Sir, by what name or weight soever you esteem this kindness which you have done me, I value it so, as might alone persuade me of your care of me;

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

in recompense of which you must be pleased to accept new assurances that I am—Your very affectionate servant,

“J. DONNE.

“I pray let my service be presented by you to Mr. Roope.”

“*To the Honourable Knight Sir H[ENRY] G[OODYER].*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—After I have told you that the Lady Hay died last Tuesday, and that to her end she was anguished with the memory of the execution of that fellow which attempted her in the coach, I have told you all which hath fallen out here. Except between you and me that may be worth the telling, that my Lord Chancellor gave me so noble and so ready a despatch, accompanied with so fatherly advice and remorse for my fortunes, that I am now, like an alchemist, delighted with discoveries by the way, though I attain not mine end. It spent me so little time after your going, that, although you speak in your letter of good despatch in your going, yet I might have overtaken you. And though perchance if I had gone, it might have been inconvenient for me to have put myself into my Lord Chamberlain’s presence if that sickness be earnest at Ashby, and so I should nothing have advanced my business, yet I should have come to that noble Lady with better confidence, and more assurance of a pardon, when I had brought a conscience, that I came despoiled of all other respects, only to kiss her hands, in whose protection I am, since I have, nor desire other station, than a place in her good opinion.

“I took so good contentment in the fashion which my Lord Chancellor used towards me, that out of a voluptuous loathness to let that taste go out of my mouth, I forbear to make any further trial in that business till the King come into these quarters. So that, Sir, I am here in place to serve you, if either I be capable of your commandments, or this town give anything worth the writing. As often as you see your noble friend, and her good sister, allow my

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

name a room in your discourse; it is a short one, and you will soon have done. But tell them not my desire to do them service, for then you engage yourself in a longer discourse than I am worthy. Only in pursuit of your commandment I sent the packet to the post, for in mine own understanding there should appear small hope of arriving by that way, except you know otherwise that the Lords mean to make some stay in their return in those parts; but the letter is brought back again, for the post went away yesterday, and they knew of no occasion of sending till next week. Therefore except I can inform myself of some good means, I will retain it till I have a fresh commandment from you. I see Mr. Taverner still in this town; the Lady Carey went from hence but yesterday. I am in some perplexity what to do with this packet, till some good fortune, or your letters clear me.—Your humble servant,

J. DONNE.

“*August 19 [1614].*”

“*To my very much respected friend Mr. GEORGE GERRARD.*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I thank you for expressing your love to me, by this diligence, I know you can distinguish between the voices of my love and of my necessity if anything in my letters sound like an importunity. Besides, I will add thus much out of counsel to you, that you can do nothing so thriftily as to keep in your purpose the payment of the rest of this year’s rent (though at your conveniency), for Sir E[dward] H[erbert]’s curiosity being so served at first, I shall be no further cause, but that the rest be related, and you in as good possession of his love, and to as good use, as your love deserves of him. You mock us when you ask news from hence. All is created there, or relates thither where you are. For that book which you command me to send, I held it but half-an-hour: which served me to read those few leaves, which were directed upon some few lines of my book. If you come to town quickly, you may get a fair widow; for

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

Mrs. Brown is fallen to that state by death of her husband. No man desires your coming more, nor shall be readier to serve you, than—Your affectionate friend and servant,

“ J. DONNE.”

In the edition of 1651, the next letter, by an obvious error, is said to be addressed to Sir Henry Goodyer. It is to me not matter of much doubt that it belongs to the Earl of Somerset, and takes its place with the other letters of petition and expostulation.

[*To the Earl of SOMERSET.*]

“ SIR,—Because to remain in this sort guilty in your Lordship’s opinion doth not only defeat all my future endeavours, but lay a heavier burden upon me, of which I am more sensible, which is ingratitude towards your Lordship, by whose favours I have been formerly so much bound; I hope your Lordship will pardon me this care and diligence which I use to rectify myself towards you. To which purpose I humbly beseech your Lordship to admit thus much into your consideration, that I neither hunted after this business at first, but apprehended it as it was presented to me, and might perchance have fallen into worse hands, nor proceeded otherwise therein, than to my poor discretion at that time seemed lawful and requisite and necessary for my reputation, who held myself bound to be able to give satisfaction to any who should doubt of the case. Of all which, if your Lordship were returned to your former favourable opinions of me, you might be pleased to make this some argument, that after his Majesty had showed his inclination to the first motion made in my behalf, I was not earnest to urge and solicit that advantage of priority, but as became me, contented myself to join with him who had made a later petition therein; and as soon as I understood how it was opposed or distasted, I threw it down at your Lordship’s feet, and abandoned it to your pleasure. Which it is necessary for me to say at this time, lest, if he who was interested with me in that business shall have proceeded any farther

therein since that time, your Lordship might conceive new suspicions of me. That your Lordship's name was at all used therein, or that any words of mine occasioned such an error in my servant, I am so sorry, as nothing but a conscience of a true guiltiness of having performed an injury to your Lordship (which can never fall upon me) could affect me more. But I, who to the measure of my comprehension have ever understood your Lordship's nobility and evenness, cannot fear that your Lordship will punish an oversight like a crime; which should be effected upon me, if your Lordship should continue your disfavour towards me, since no penalty could come so burdensome to my mind and to my fortune as that. And since the repose of both consists in your Lordship's favour, I humbly entreat to be restored to your favour, giving your Lordship my faith in pawn that I will be as wary of forfeiting it by any second occasion, as I am sorry for this.—Yours,

“J. D.”

In 1614 Sir Walter Raleigh, then confined in the Tower, presented to the public his enormous fragment of a *History of the World*. The publication of this vast chronological rhapsody excited Donne to a curious piece of laborious pleasantry. The person who has preserved it for us among the Tanner MSS. at Oxford states that it occurred in “Dr. Donne's *Problems*, but was so bitter that his son, Jack Donne, LL.D., thought not fit to print it with the rest” in 1652. It runs as follows:—

“Why was Sir Walter Raleigh thought the fittest man to write the history of these times? Was it—

“Because that being told at his arraignment that a witness accusing himself had the strength of two, he may seem by writing the ills of his own time to be believed? Or is it because he might re-enjoy those times by the meditation of them? Or because, if he should undertake higher times, he doth not think that he can come nearer to the beginning of the world? Or because, like a bird in a cage, he takes his tunes from every passenger that last whistled? Or because he thinks not that the best echo

which repeats most of the sentence, but that which repeats less more plainly?"<sup>1</sup>

All this is not worthy of Donne's wit. We may notice the curious use of the same metaphor for the imprisoned Raleigh by Donne and by Prince Henry; the latter had said, "No man but my father would keep such a bird in a cage," but the Prince's intention was as generous as Donne's was offensive.

The year 1614 declined without bringing any consolation to Donne, who was once more reduced to the most painful and wearing anxiety. Nothing seems to have prepared him in the least for the startling crisis which December was to bring with it. The Earl of Somerset showed no inclination to redeem his promises, and the King seemed as inaccessible as ever. Even Donne's old friend, the Countess of Bedford, who had once paid his debts, and from whom he had particular hopes founded on his ingenious elegy upon her brother, now disappointed him. He was troubled by the pertinacity of his creditors, and it is probable that he already perceived, in the failing health of Sir Robert Drury, that this patron might, as was the case, soon desert him. Donne's exact relations with Drury, we may say in parenthesis, are the most mysterious element in his condition at this time. We are to believe that since 1610 he had been, with all his family, the guests of this profuse and hospitable knight, as Dr. Joseph Hall had been before him. Yet no mention of Sir Robert or of Lady Drury is to be found in Donne's copious correspondence, with the exception of one colourless letter which has been printed above. Were it not that experience teaches us that those with whom we are in daily intercourse are those of whom our letters, sometimes, speak the least, we should be tempted to think the lodgings in Drury House a myth.

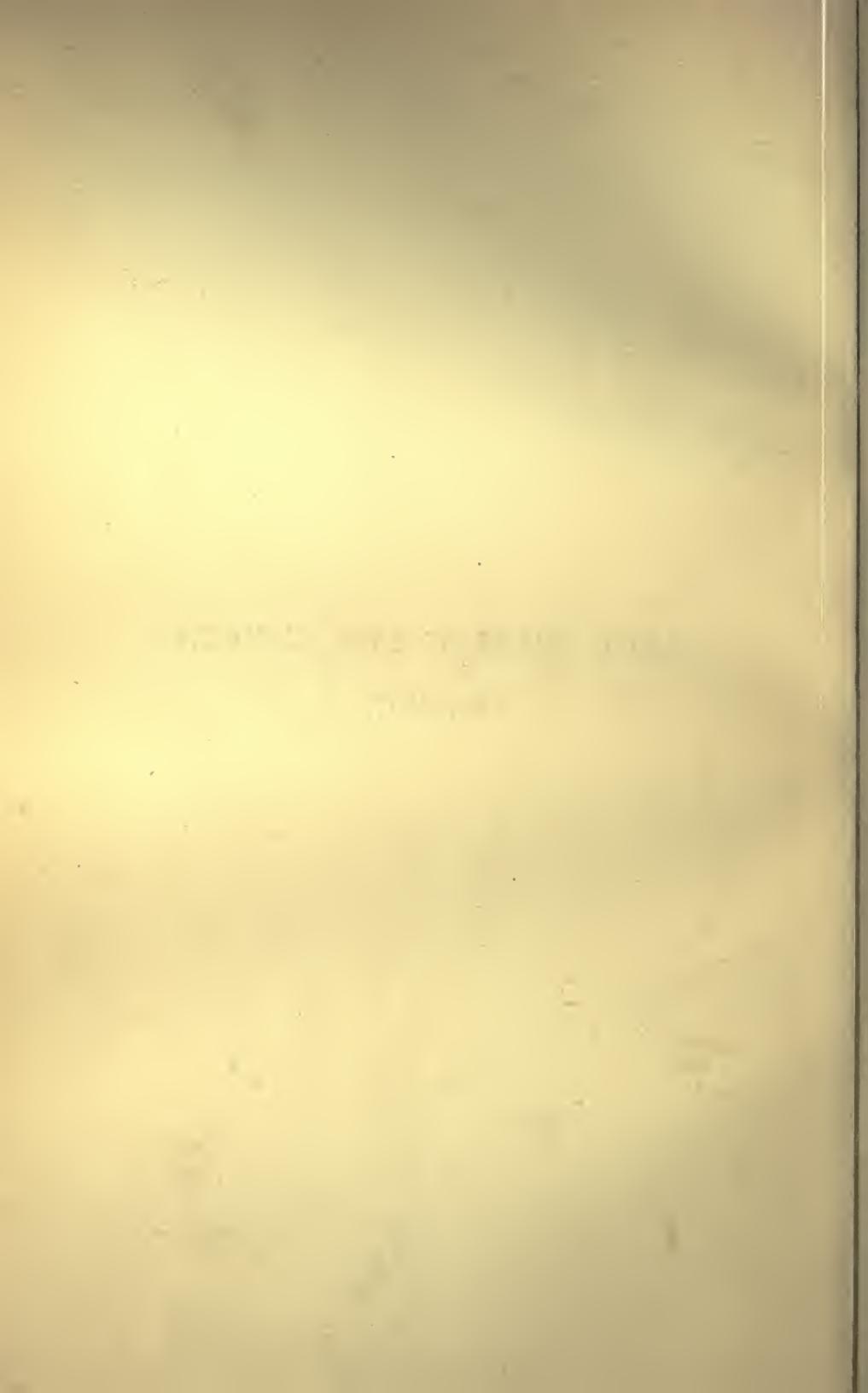
Donne was now in his forty-second year. His health was unsatisfactory, although he seems slowly to have recovered from his threatened attack of blindness. His wife, worn out with incessant child-bearing, was becoming less and less a companion or a support to him. Their fourth

<sup>1</sup> Tanner MSS., 299, fol. 32.

son, Francis, died, and was buried in St. Clement Danes on the 10th of November. "No man attends court fortunes with more impatience than I do," Donne said. Yet he was forced to continue this ignominious pursuit of a competency. The whole of this period in Donne's life was ignominious, and his dependence upon Somerset degrading to his judgment and conscience. The reader cannot fail to observe a temporary deterioration of his character. Poverty and anxiety dragged this beautiful nature down into the dust. But a complete relief was now coming, and a startling change in the whole order and tenor of his being. His life as a layman was about to be abruptly closed.

EARLY YEARS IN THE CHURCH

1615-1617



## CHAPTER XI

### EARLY YEARS IN THE CHURCH

1615-1617

ONE of the most curious facts about the life of Donne, as written for us so charmingly by Izaak Walton, is the extraordinary tissue of errors, circumstantially recorded, in the pages where he describes the poet's entrance into holy orders. The letters we possess, and in particular one of the highest importance, which I am able to print for the first time, give us the precise outlines which enable us to see into what curious mistakes Walton, or rather Donne in the information he gave to Walton, fell. The page in which Walton describes the circumstances of Donne's ordination contains scarcely a statement which is historically correct; neither the date, nor the conditions, nor the company are those which are given us by contemporary documents. Where a series of letters of the exact time say one thing and Walton long afterwards says another, it is hardly Walton whom we can dare to follow. And yet it is probable that in the attitude of the King to Donne, and in the conversations recorded, we may safely follow Walton. These would seem to Donne himself to be the really essential matters. Whether an interview took place at Theobald's or at Newmarket in 1610 or in 1614, whether Somerset was "in his greatest height of favour" or already beginning the rapid course of his decline, these would strike Donne and his earliest and most delightful biographer as wholly unimportant.

In recounting, therefore, what occurred at the close of 1614, I will endeavour to reconstruct from all available materials what was the exact course of events, without either disregarding Walton's invaluable help or leaning

upon him when he is certainly mistaken. We have seen, then, that in 1612 Donne had himself suggested to Lord Rochester (as he then was) that he should enter the Church, and a place there be found for him. So far from Donne's being "persuaded to enter the ministry," and refusing from a scruple of conscience, as he had done at an earlier juncture, it is quite plain that in 1612 Rochester had to dissuade him from the idea, and successfully to discourage it. It is possible that he did this without consulting the King, and as we find him immediately employing Donne in his peculiar legal work, he may have selfishly prevented Donne from approaching the King. But this, although it seems to have crossed Donne's mind, may be dismissed as far-fetched. Nor is there any real evidence that the King expressed any wish at all with regard to Donne. He had accepted the dedication of *Pseudo-Martyr* in 1610, and had then allowed Donne's existence to slip out of his mind. Walton's story of Donne's frequently waiting upon the King and attending him at his meals is unquestionably all a myth and a mistake; there is no evidence that Donne was ever in the presence of James I. except during the interview about the oath of supremacy and allegiance in the winter of 1609, until his ordination in January 1615; Walton's pleasant anecdotes are, doubtless, perfectly true of a later period.

Rochester, or, as we must now call him, Somerset, having closed his ears to the suggestion of Donne's entering the Church, and having employed him on his own private legal affairs, Donne evidently abandoned the idea of taking holy orders, and settled down to the hope of securing secular employment at the Court. But if in the winter of 1612 he "sold" himself to Somerset, if in the course of 1613 he was occupying himself in all the details of the Nullity Suit, 1614 came and passed without anything substantial being secured for him by his patron. Donne's distress and anxiety throughout this year of complicated misfortunes can easily be imagined. He had toiled for Somerset, and done his dirty work, with absolute confidence of reward, and he was continually put off with protestations.

While Somerset was still ascending in the firmament of royal favour, this might be safe enough, though to a nervous suitor exceedingly agitating and wearing. But when there came to be rumours of the instability of the favourite, then Donne's anguish must have been extreme.

Donne was so placed as to have a sensitive comprehension of what was passing around him, although the springs of action were of course hidden from him. He was unquestionably conscious that, as 1614 neared its close, the prestige of Somerset was declining, and the King's eyes were fixed on a younger favourite. Familiar as he made himself with all that went on at the edges of the Court, he would be aware that in November the young George Villiers received the appropriate appointment of cup-bearer to his Majesty. Probably, in popular gossip, the decline of the King's affection for Somerset was exaggerated, and Donne would be in a panic lest the Lord Chamberlain should be disgraced before anything was done for Donne's permanent welfare. Towards the end of November, therefore, he seems to have addressed Somerset in terms of urgency, putting aside the obsequiousness of courtierly address a little, and insisting upon the recompense so long due. Somerset either thought that this was no moment for making a brilliant enemy, or else was wearied with Donne's importunity; at any rate, he summoned him to attend the King in Essex.

It does not appear exactly when it was that the Earl of Somerset thus responded by desiring Donne to come at once to Theobald's. Probably it was about the 20th of November 1614. When Donne made his appearance, Somerset came out into the garden to meet him, and told him that one of the clerks of the Council had died that night. He was evidently met by some impatience and incredulity; Donne had often before been put off with such vague protestations. Somerset, therefore, replied, "Mr. Donne, to testify the reality of my affection, and my purpose to prefer you, stay in this garden till I go up to the King, and bring you word that you are Clerk of the Council; doubt not my doing this, for I know the King loves you, and know the King will not deny me." But the hour was past when

Somerset had but to hint a desire for James to hasten to gratify it. The King had his own idea of Donne's proclivities and gifts. He answered Somerset, "I know Mr. Donne is a learned man, has the abilities of a learned divine, and will prove a successful preacher; and my desire is to prefer him in that way, and in that way I will deny you nothing for him."

We are to imagine Somerset, a little crestfallen, returning to the garden, and bringing Donne with him back into the Royal presence. The King "descended to a persuasion, almost to a solicitation of him, to enter into sacred orders." Barwick uses similar language—"at the persuasion of King James, he entered into holy orders." Donne himself, writing long afterwards to Sir Robert Ker, said: "When I sit still and reckon all my old Master's royal favours to me, I return evermore to that—that he first inclined me to be a minister." And again, in the dedication of his *Devotions* of 1624 to Charles, Prince of Wales, he says: "In my second birth, your Highness's royal father vouchsafed me his hand, not only to sustain me in it, but to lead me to it."

It is almost certain, however, that he did not immediately make up his mind. He must have asked for a few days to consult with his friends and to decide. The King, meantime, moved on from Theobald's to Newmarket, and thither about the end of November Donne repaired, with a statement of his views and scruples. He laid these before the King, and they were very graciously considered; he "received from the King as good allowance and encouragement to pursue my purpose as I could desire." He, on his part, undertook to accept the King's offer, and he returned to London, on the 2nd of December, to prepare himself for ordination. Next day he addressed to his father-in-law this extremely interesting letter, which is now for the first time printed.<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—I returned not till yesternight from my expensive journey to Newmarket, where I have received from

<sup>1</sup> From the Loseley MSS.

the King as good allowance and encouragement to pursue my purpose as I could desire. Whilst I was there I found that my Lord Chamberlain refused to swear a gentleman into a place as Groom of the Chamber, after he had bargained for it, because he was a servant to my Lord of Canterbury. This and some other lights make me see that matters stand not so well between them, but that they are likely to oppose one another's dependants. Before I go about to seek my Lord of Canterbury, I would gladly, if I could, discern his inclination to me, and whether he have any conjecture upon my relation to my Lord Chamberlain, which he is very likely to have come to his knowledge since my going, by reason of his Lordship's more open avowing me than heretofore. If, therefore, you have taken any occasion to speak with his Grace since I desired that favour of you, and have perceived anything thereby which you think fit I should know before your coming hither, I humbly beseech you to let me understand it, when any servant of yours hath occasion to come to London, that I may use my best means of disposing him towards it.

“My Lord Chamberlain hath laid his commandment upon the Master of Requests to forbear to move the King in the other business, for any man; though I saw the bill for the King's hand, and saw it was still earnestly pursued out of York House. His Lordship hath assured me that it shall sleep till I move him to set it afoot hereafter, when my son or any for me may have profit thereby, with which purpose I will acquaint my Lord Chancellor, and humbly entreat him that it may be so. And so, sir, with my humble duty to you and your poor daughters, I leave you to our most blessed Saviour.

“Your ever to be commanded,

“J. DONNE.

“At my poor house,

3 December 1614.”

From this we may perceive several interesting points, first, that although Donne had so long been in Somerset's service, that relation between them was not an avowed one.

Not until they stood together in the garden at Theobald's was Donne openly known to be Somerset's protégé. Secondly, we see Donne, with something of the wisdom of the serpent, turning towards a new patron in his new profession. My Lord of Canterbury was George Abbot, a very honest man, and a primate of too great independence to please either James or his arrogant minions. From the first, the Archbishop had mistrusted Somerset's attitude in the Essex trial; and not merely did his acuteness suspect a crime where others saw no more than a pardonable levity, but, as Mr. S. R. Gardiner has pointed out, he regarded Somerset's intimacy with the Howards as a symptom of a general and dangerous court corruption. Abbot stood out at this moment, in his zeal for God and his jealous rectitude, as the most menacing figure in the path of Somerset. If Donne was to rise in the Church of which Abbot was the administrator, it was important that he should not be known or thought of as a creature of Somerset.

It is more than probable that Abbot, who was very well informed, was aware, as Donne feared that he might be, of Donne's activity for Somerset in the business of the nullity. Very possibly the documents which Donne drew up for the favourite, and which still exist, had passed under the eyes of Abbot. There is no evidence of any cordiality in the future between the Archbishop and the Dean. Abbot survived Donne, dying in 1633, and I have a suspicion that it was the opposition of the Archbishop which delayed Donne in rising to those dignities in the Church which his talents and the favour of two monarchs would naturally have demanded. No one took to heart more profoundly than Abbot the shame and horror of the Somerset marriage, and I think that he would consider that the man who had laboured to collect evidence on the side of Lady Essex, and had composed an epithalamium for those hideous nuptials, could never be a bishop of the Church of England.

Be this as it may, Donne certainly hastened to propitiate Archbishop Abbot. In 1651 his son John published a little duodecimo, entitled, *Essays in Divinity; by the late*

*Dr. Donne, Dean of St. Paul's. Being several Disquisitions interwoven with Meditations and Prayers: before he entered into Holy Orders.* If we are to believe the younger Donne, these were written hurriedly, "the voluntary sacrifices of several hours," while he was debating whether he should or should not enter the Church. We may place the date of composition between the beginning of December 1614 and the middle of January 1615, and take them to be the work of that transitional period, not of doubt, indeed, but of probation. When we examine the *Essays in Divinity*, however, for evidence of Donne's state of soul at this juncture, we meet with considerable disappointment. There is no revelation here of the writer's personal experience; nothing is for edification. These short homilies are more like the notes of a theological professor who is lecturing on Genesis and the early chapters of Exodus, than the outpourings of a man who is trembling on the threshold of the Holy of Holies. There is a total absence of unction, even of spiritual enthusiasm; the essays are scholastic exercises and no more. It seems to me likely that they were written to be laid before the Archbishop as a proof of the soundness of Donne's orthodoxy and the breadth of his learning, both of which they eminently illustrate. At the close of the little volume are printed four prayers, which are far more eloquent and human than the somewhat crabbed *Essays in Divinity*. The first of these prayers, in fact, does give us the cry of Donne's heart at this solemn moment of transition. Some passages of it have a biographical interest for us:—

"I beseech Thee that since, by Thy grace, I have thus long meditated upon Thee and spoken of Thee, I may now speak to Thee. As Thou hast enlightened and enlarged me to contemplate Thy greatness, so, O God, descend Thou and stoop down to see my infirmities and the Egypt in which I live, and, if Thy good pleasures be such, hasten mine exodus and deliverance, for I desire to be dissolved and be with Thee. O Lord, I most humbly acknowledge and confess Thine infinite mercy, that when Thou hadst almost broke the staff of bread . . . then Thou broughtest me into this Egypt, where Thou hast appointed

Thy stewards to husband Thy blessings and to feed Thy flock. . . . Hourly Thou rectifiest my lameness, hourly Thou restorest my sight, and hourly not only deliverest me, but raisest me from the death of sin. . . . Hourly Thou in Thy Spirit descendest into my heart, to overthrow these legions of spirits of disobedience and incredulity and murmuring. Thou hast set up many candlesticks and kindled many lamps in me, but I have either blown them out, or carried them to guide me in by and forbidden ways. Thou hast given me a desire of knowledge, and some means to it, and some possession of it; and I have armed myself with Thy weapons against Thee. . . . But let me, in despite of me, be now of so much use to Thy glory, that by Thy mercy to my sin, other sinners may see how much sin Thou canst pardon."

As a testimony to the variety of emotions which swept across the heart and brain of Donne at this supreme moment in his career, this exquisite prayer, which lies like an oasis in the rather sandy wastes of the *Essays in Divinity*, can hardly be over-estimated.

Ten days after his return from Newmarket he wrote a letter on much more mundane affairs, to the excellent Sir Henry Goodyer. It was necessary, before "making an end with the world," to clear up his business, which had plainly run into some confusion. His debts troubled him, and needed to be paid before his ordination. In this letter, the name of the new favourite, George Villiers, makes its appearance for the first time; it was only in the previous August that this comely young man of twenty-two had presented himself at court, and had almost immediately captivated the King. The Mr. Karre, or Ker, was a nephew of Somerset's, whom late in November 1614 the King had appointed to be a gentleman of the bedchamber.

"*To the Honourable Knight Sir H[ENRY] G[OODYER].*"<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—Your son left here a letter for me, from you. But I neither discern by it that you have received any

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

of mine lately,—which have been many, and large, and too confident to be lost, especially since (as I remember) they always conveyed others to that good Lady,—neither do I know where to find, by any diligence, your son's lodging. But I hope he will apprehend that impossibility in me, and find me here, where he shall also find as much readiness to serve him as at Polesworth. This letter of yours makes me perceive, that that Lady hath expressed her purpose to you in particular, for the next term. Accordingly, I make my promises; for since one that meant but to flatter told an emperor, that his benefits were to be reckoned from the day of the promise, because he never failed, it were an injury from me to the constancy of that noble Lady if I should not, as soon as she promises, do some act of assurance of the performance; which I have done, as I say, in fixing times to my creditors; for by the end of next term, I will make an end with the world, by God's grace.

“I lack you here, for my Lord of Dorset, he might make a cheap bargain with me now, and disengage his honour, which in good faith is a little bound, because he admitted so many witnesses of his large disposition towards me. They are preparing for a masque of gentlemen, in which Mr. Villiers is, and Mr. Karre, whom I told you before my Lord Chamberlain had brought into the bedchamber. I pray, if you make not so thick goings as you used, send this letter to that good woman, for it is not only mine. If I could stay this letter an hour, I should send you something of Savoy, for Sir Rob. Rich, who is now come from court, hath laid a commandment upon me by message to wait upon him; and I know his business, because he never sought me, but in one kind. But the importunity of the hour excuses me, and delivers you from further trouble from

“Your very true friend and servant,

“J. DONNE.

“13th December [1614].”

“To the Honourable Knight Sir H[ENRY] G[OODYER].<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—Since I received a letter by your son, whom I have not yet had the honour to see, I had a letter packet from you by Mr. Roe. To the former, I wrote before. In this I have no other commandment from you, but to tell you, whether Mr. Villiers have received from the King any additions of honour or profit. Without doubt he hath yet none. He is here, practising for the masque; of which, if I misremember not, I wrote as much as you desire to know, in a letter which seems not to have been come to you when you wrote.

“In the Savoy business, the King hath declared himself by an engagement, to assist him with £100,000 a year if the war continue. But I believe, he must farm out your Warwickshire benevolence for the payment thereof. Upon the strength of this engagement, Sir Robert Rich becomes confident in his hopes. If you stood in an equal disposition for the west, and only forbore, by reason of Mr. Martin’s silence, I wonder; for I think, I told you, that he was gone; and I saw in Sir Thomas Lucy’s hand, a letter from him to you, which was likely to tell you as much. Since I came from court, I have stirred very little. Now that the court comes again to us, I may have something which you may be content to receive from

“Your very affectionate servant,

“J. DONNE.

“18th December [1614].”

The masque of gentlemen mentioned in the two previous letters was doubtless Ben Jonson’s *Mercury vindicated from the Alchemists at Court*, which was performed “by gentlemen, the King’s servants,” and which contains some of Jonson’s most alembicated prose and a few strains of exquisite and rather Donne-like verse.

Sir Thomas Roe, one of Donne’s most faithful friends, is presented to us in the next letter as passing through London on his way from court. He was doubtless pro-

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

ceeding to the country to make preparations for leaving England on a long and hazardous mission. He had served in Parliament for a short time, and was now appointed to represent James I. at the court of the Emperor Jehanghir at Agra, and to protect there the interests of the infant East India Company. He sailed early in 1615. It is amusing to notice, in letter after letter, how the figures of Villiers preoccupied the mind of Donne. He foresaw, with almost too much of the delicate *flair* of the courtier, the preponderance which this youth was about to take in the counsels of the King. Meanwhile, to eyes less instructed than Donne's, the prestige of the Lord Chamberlain seemed as secure as ever, and even Donne, as we see, feels that if he prints an edition of his poems, he must of necessity dedicate it to Somerset.

“*To Sir H[ENRY] G[OOODYER].*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I writ to you yesterday, taking the boldness to put a letter into the good Lady's packet for you. This morning I had this new occasion of writing, that Sir Thomas Roe, who brought this enclosed letter to me, and left it unsealed, entreated me to take the first opportunity of sending it. Besides that which is in that letter (for he read it to me) I came to the knowledge in York House that my Lord Chancellor hath been moved, and incensed against you; and asking Sir Thomas Roe, if he were directly or occasionally any cause of that, he tells me thus much, that Sir W. Lover and Sir H. Carey have obtained of my Lord to have a pur-sivant, and consequently a sergeant, sent into the country for you.

“My Lord grounds this earnestness against you, upon some refusing to appear upon process which hath been taken out against you. And I perceive Sir Edward Eston, and both the other admit consultations, of ways by petition to the King, or council, or Lord Chamberlain, or any other. The great danger, obliquely likely to fall, is that when it comes to light, how you stand towards Mr. Mathew, you

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1615.

may lose the ease which you have by colour of that extent, and he may lose the benefit, of having had so much of his estate concealed. You will, therefore, at least pardon my advising you, to place those sums, which by your retiring I presume you do employ upon payment of debts, in such places as that these particular friends be not forced to leave being so. I confess, the going about to pay debts hastens importunity.

“I find in myself that where I was not asked money before, yet when I offered to pay next term they seem loth to afford me that time, which might justly have been desperate before; but that which you told me out of the country, with the assistance which I hope to find here (especially if your endeavour may advance it at Dorset House), I hope will enable me to escape clamour, and an ill conscience in that behalf.

“One thing more I must tell you, but so softly that I am loth to hear myself; and so softly that, if that good Lady were in the room with you and this letter, she might not hear. It is that I am brought to a necessity of printing my poems, and addressing them to my Lord Chamberlain. This I mean to do forthwith, not for much public view, but at mine own cost, a few copies. I apprehend some incongruities in the resolution, and I know what I shall suffer from many interpretations; but I am at an end of much considering that, and if I were as startling in that kind as ever I was, yet in this particular I am under an unescapable necessity, as I shall let you perceive when I see you. By this occasion I am made a rhapsoder of mine own rags, and that cost me more diligence to seek them than it did to make them.

“This made me ask to borrow that old book of you, which it will be too late to see, for that use, when I see you; for I must do this, as a valediction to the world, before I take orders. But this is it I am to ask you, whether you ever made any such use of the letter in verse, *A nostre Comtesse chez vous*, as that I may not put it in amongst the rest to persons of that rank; for I desire very very much that something should bear her name in the

book, and I would be just to my written words to my Lord Harington to write nothing after that. I pray tell me as soon as you can if I be at liberty to insert that, for if you have by any occasion applied any pieces of it, I see not that it will be discerned when it appears in the whole piece.

“Though this be a little matter, I would be sorry not to have an account of it within as little after New Year’s-tide as you could. I have something else to say of Mr. Villiers, but because I hope to see you here shortly, and because new additions to the truths or rumours which concern him are likely to be made by occasion of this masque, I forbear to send you the edition of this mart, since I know it will be augmented by the next, of which, if you prevent it not by coming, you shall have by letter an account from

“Your very affectionate friend and servant,

“J. DONNE.

“Vigilia St. Tho. [Dec. 20] 1614.”

This projected private edition of his Poems has greatly exercised the minds of successive editors of Donne. People have been known to advertise for it, and the remotest corners of old libraries have been searched in the vain hope of its discovery. For my own part I am convinced that it never existed. Donne’s friends, one cannot doubt, would dissuade him from taking the moment of his ordination to publish a collection of worldly verses which he had never been able to make up his mind as a layman to print. The least opposition from Sir Henry Goodyer or the Countess of Bedford would suffice, at such a busy moment, to divert his thoughts from so untimely a project. And one objection occurs to us which would only have to be mentioned to Donne to put him out of conceit with the whole idea. He was pledged, as he explains, to dedicate the poems, if he determined to print, to the Lord Chamberlain. But, at this juncture, it was most important for him to stand well with the Archbishop of Canterbury. We can imagine nothing which would rouse Abbot’s suspicions and awaken his prejudice against a candidate for holy orders more than

to discover that he had just printed a volume of secular poetry and addressed it to Somerset. At all events, this private edition of Donne's poems of December 1614 has never been seen, has never been heard of, and is referred to by no contemporary writer. Whatever is lost, so important a work of so prominent a man, watched by so many careful friends, could not but have survived. We are safe then, I think, in determining that somebody, probably Goodyer himself, dissuaded Donne from printing, and that the project so abruptly formed was as suddenly and finally dropped.

Though he was disappointed in his hope that Lady Bedford would pay his debts, yet that charming woman gave him £30 towards them, a substantial gift in those days. He was not quite gracious in taking her excuses, which we know, however, to be genuine, for she was at that moment involved in a tiresome and expensive Chancery suit which Sir John Harington had brought against her mother. In October 1614 she had complained to Lady Cornwallis that she was "feeling heavily the burden of a broken estate." She was, indeed, a victim to that passion for ostentatious extravagance which ran like a disease through the ranks of the English nobility at the beginning of the seventeenth century. We are told that she acquired the works of Holbein without regard to price, and her princely hospitality had made Twickenham almost as conspicuous as a royal residence.

At length, early in 1615, Donne was ready. Dr. Jessopp has ingeniously conjectured that he was ordained on the 25th of January, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. On the 27th, at all events, as we shall immediately see, he says, "there are very few days past since I took orders." All efforts to discover where the ceremony was held have failed. But on making up his mind to obey the King's command, Donne had immediately communicated with Dr. John King, who in 1611 had succeeded Abbot as Bishop of London. This was a very old friend, for King, when he was made Dean of Christ Church in 1605, had for several years been chaplain to the Lord

Keeper Egerton, and was therefore thrown into constant relation with Donne. Dr. King received the news of the poet's determination with expressions of joy, and "proceeded with all convenient speed to ordain him, first deacon, then priest."

I have not succeeded in discovering what was Donne's first charge. He must have had a "title," but it seems quite uncertain to what he was ordained. It was probably to some London chaplaincy, or he may have been ordained a royal chaplain without any preliminary delay. Walton was evidently vague about it. He thought, in 1640, that Donne was "ordained priest," and in 1659 that he "entered into sacred orders," in the summer of 1615. But what was he doing from January to March? It seems impossible to explain this discrepancy. Perhaps he served for a little while as a curate at Paddington.

"*To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER, Gentleman  
of His Highness's Bedchamber.*"<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—I am come to that tenderness of conscience, that I need a pardon for meaning to come to Newmarket in this weather. If I had come, I must have asked you many real pardons, for the many importunities that I should have used towards you. But since I have divers errands thither (except I belie myself in that phrase, since it is all one errand to promove my own business, and to receive your commands) I shall give you but a short respite, since I shall follow this paper within two days. And that I accuse myself (no further than I am guilty), the principal reason of my breaking the appointment of waiting upon Mr. Rawlins was, that I understood the King was from Newmarket; and for coming thither in the King's absence, I never heard of excuse; except when Butler sends a desperate patient in consumption thither for good air, which is an ill errand now.

"Besides that I could not well come till now (for there are very few days past since I took orders) there can be

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

no loss in my absence except when I come, my Lord should have thereby the less latitude to procure the King's letters to Cambridge. I beseech you, therefore, take some occasion to refresh that business to his Lordship, by presenting my name, and purpose of coming very shortly, and be content to receive me, who has been ever your servant, to the addition of

“Your poor chaplain,

J. DONNE.

“27th January [1615].”

It appears that Donne was, at first, very shy of preaching, an art in which he had had no instruction. It was only by degrees that his modesty could be prevailed on to try a London audience; his maiden efforts were made in country villages. The first sermon he preached was at Paddington, then a rural and sequestered parish, the licentiate of which, a certain Griffin Edwards, received a stipend of £28 per annum. Donne must have preached in the old and small parish church, dedicated to St. Catherine; it was already inconvenient and falling out of repair, and becoming later on a ruin, was pulled down and rebuilt on a larger scale in 1678. That Donne's troubles were far from being at an end, the following slightly querulous letter may show us. The public anxiety to see the actual articles of the Spanish treaty is reflected here; but they did not reach the King's hands till the beginning of May. In the meantime, we may safely date this letter in March 1615.

“To Sir H[ENRY] G[ODDYER].<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I had destined all this Tuesday for the Court, because it is both a Sermon day, and the first day of the King's being here. Before I was to go forth, I had made up this enclosed packet for you, and then came this messenger with your packet, of which, if you can remember the number, you cannot expect any account thereof from me, who have not half-an-hour left me before I go forth,

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

and your messenger speaks of a necessity of returning homeward before my returning home. If upon the delivery of them, or any other occasion, there intervene new subject of writing, I shall relieve myself upon Tuesday, if Tamworth carrier be in town. To the particulars of the letter to myself, I will give this paper and line.

“Of my Lady Bedford, I must say so much as must importune you to burn the letter; for I would say nothing of her upon record, that should not testify my thankfulness for all her graces. But upon this motion, which I made to her by letter, and by Sir Thomas Roe’s assistance, if any scruple should arise in her, she was somewhat more startling, than I looked for from her; she had more suspicion of my calling, a better memory of my past life, than I had thought her nobility could have admitted; of all which, though I humbly thank God, I can make good use, as one that needs as many remembrances in that kind, as not only friends but enemies can present, yet I am afraid they proceed in her rather from some ill impression taken from Dr. Burges, than that they grow in herself. But whosoever be the conduit, the water is the Holy Ghost’s, and in that acceptation I take it. For her other way of expressing her favour to me, I must say, it is not with that cheerfulness as heretofore she hath delivered herself towards me. I am almost sorry, that an elegy should have been able to move her to so much compassion heretofore, as to offer to pay my debts; and my greater wants now, and for so good a purpose, as to come disengaged into that profession, being plainly laid open to her, should work no farther but that she sent me £30, which in good faith she excused with that, which is in both parts true, that her present debts were burdensome, and that I could not doubt of her inclination, upon all future emergent occasions, to assist me. I confess to you, her former fashion towards me had given a better confidence; and this diminution in her makes me see, that I must use more friends than I thought I should have needed.

“I would you could burn this letter before you read it; at least do when you have read it. For, I am afraid

out of a contemplation of mine own unworthiness, and fortune, that the example of this Lady should work upon the Lady where you are; for though goodness be originally in her, and she do good for the deed's sake, yet, perchance, she may think it a little wisdom to make such measure of me, as they who know no better do.

“Of any new treaty of a match with Spain, I hear nothing. The wars in the Low Countries, to judge by their present state, are very likely to go forward. No word of a Parliament, and I myself have heard words of the King as directly against any such purpose, as any can sound. I never heard word, till in your letter, of any stirs in Scotland, for that of the French King which you ask, it hath this good ground, that in the Assembly there a proposition hath been made, and well entertained, that the King should be declared to have full jurisdiction in France; and no other person to have any. It hath much of the model and frame of our Oath of Allegiance, but with some modification. It is true, it goes farther than that State hath drove in any public declarations, but not farther than their schools have drove often and constantly; the easiness that it hath found in passing thus far without opposition, puts (perchance unnecessarily) in me a doubt, that they are sure to choke it, at the Royal assent, and therefore oppose it not, by the way, to sweeten the conveyance of their other purposes. Sir, if I stay longer I shall lose the text, at Court, therefore I kiss your hand, and rest

“Your very true servant,  
“J. DONNE.

“We hear (but without second as yet) that Sir Richard Philip's brother in France hath taken the habit of a Capuchin.”

It is plain, I think, from this letter that Donne, disappointed in his hope that the Countess of Bedford would pay the whole of his debts, turned to the Countess of Huntingdon, his old friend, who had been Lady Elizabeth Stanley. From the terms in which he speaks of “the other

Countess," in the letter of some two months later, it would appear that Lady Huntingdon responded generously. "The Countess" is always Lady Bedford in Donne's correspondence.

It does not appear that James I. was in any hurry to provide for Donne. Perhaps he thought it well to leave him alone for a while to settle into his new habits of life. Walton, indeed, assures us that "presently after he entered his holy profession, the King sent for him, and made him his chaplain-in-ordinary, and promised to take a particular care for his preferment," so that he was perhaps ordained a royal chaplain. But in June, Donne speaks of "obeying a pre-contract laid upon me," which involves a "bondage" which he has never before been used to. This is probably the office of Court chaplain. Meanwhile a slight letter to Sir Robert Kerr refers to the birth of Donne's tenth child, and fifth daughter, Margaret, who was baptized three days later (April 20). She was the one of all Donne's family who, as far as I can discover, outlived him the longest, for, as Lady Bowles of Chislehurst, she survived until October 3, 1679.<sup>1</sup>

*"To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER, Gentleman  
of His Highness's Bedchamber."<sup>2</sup>*

"SIR,—I have often sinned towards you, with a presumption of being pardoned, but now I do it without hope, and without daring to entreat you to pardon the fault. In which there are thus many degrees of importunity. That I must beg of you to christen a child, which is but a daughter, and in which you must be content to be associated with ladies of our own alliance, but good women, and all this upon Thursday next in the afternoon.

"Sir, I have so many and so indelible impressions of your favour to me, as they might serve to spread over all my poor race. But since I see that I stand like a tree, which once a year bears, though no fruit, yet this mast of children, and so am sure, that one year or other I should

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F.

<sup>2</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

afflict you with this request, I had rather be presently under the obligations and the thankfulness towards you, than meditate such a trouble to you against another year. I was desirous this paper might kiss your hands as soon as you came, that if any other diversions made this inconvenient to you, I might have another exercise of your favour, by knowing so much from you, who in every act of yours make me more and more

“Your humble and thankful servant,

“J. DONNE.

“17th April [1615].”

Donne's letters to Sir Henry Goodyer are tantalisingly rare during these years which immediately followed his ordination. The next seems to belong to April 1615, however; it is particularly interesting, as giving us Donne's attitude at this time to the Church of Rome. As I have said above, “the other Countess” (Lady Huntingdon), seems to be in favour here, above “the Countess” (Lady Bedf ord), for having more largely responded to the appeal to pay Donne's debts. It is to be wished that the poet had at this juncture remembered more warmly what he owed to Lady Bedf ord's kindness in the past. She was now suffering from the results of her extravagant hospitality at Twickenham, and was doubtless absolutely unable to be as generous to Donne as she would gladly have been. The verses to the Countess of Huntingdon are probably the very long epistle beginning—

“Man to God's image, Eve to man's was made,  
Nor find we that God breath'd a soul in her;  
Canons will not Church functions you invade  
Nor laws to civil office you prefer.”

This is a typical poem of Donne's advanced age, and is particularly noticeable for the modification of its metrical system. In all his poems written after 1615 we find a change of prosody, an abandonment of the harsh and eccentric inversions of his earlier manner, so marked as to be in itself an indication of the period when a poem

was composed. It may be desirable to quote some stanzas from this epistle to the Countess of Huntingdon—

“ If the world’s age and death be argued well  
 By the sun’s fall, which now towards earth doth bend,  
 Then we might fear that Virtue, since she fell  
 So low as woman, should be near her end.

But she’s not stoop’d, but raised ; exiled by men  
 She fled to heav’n, that’s heavenly things, that’s you ;  
 She was in all men thinly scatter’d then,  
 But now a mass contracted in a few.

She gilded us, but you are gold ; and she  
 Informed us, but transubstantiates you.  
 Soft dispositions, which ductile be,  
 Elixir-like, she makes not clean, but new.

Taught by great constellations—which being framed  
 Of the most stars take low names, Crab and Bull,  
 When single planets by the gods are named—  
 You covet not great names, of great things full.

So you, as woman, one doth comprehend,  
 And in the veil of kindred others see ;  
 To some you are reveal’d, as in a friend,  
 And as a virtuous prince far off to me.”

I am inclined to think that the Countess of Huntingdon had made an extremely handsome response to Donne’s begging letter.

“ I was your prophet in your younger days,  
 And now your chaplain, God in you to praise,”

he concludes.

“ *To my very true and very good friend*  
 Sir HENRY GOODYER.<sup>1</sup>

“ SIR,—At some later reading I was more affected with that part of your letter, which is of the book, and the nameless letters, than at first. I am not sorry, for that

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

affection were for a jealousy or suspicion of a flexibility in you. But I am angry that any should think you had in your religion peccant humours, defective or abundant, or that such a book (if I mistake it not) should be able to work upon you; my comfort is, that their judgment is too weak to endanger you, since by this it confesses that it mistakes you, in thinking you irresolved or various; yet let me be bold to fear, that that sound true opinion, that in all Christian professions there is way to salvation (which I think you think), may have been so incommodiously or intempestively sometimes uttered by you; or else your having friends equally near you of all the impressions of religion, may have testified such an indifferency, as hath occasioned some to further such inclinations as they have mistaken to be in you.

“ This I have feared, because heretofore the inobedient Puritans, and now the over-obedient Papists, attempt you. It hath hurt very many, not in their conscience nor ends, but in their reputation and ways, that others have thought them fit to be wrought upon. As some bodies are as wholesomely nourished as ours with acorns, and endure nakedness, both which would be dangerous to us, if we for them should leave our former habits, though theirs were the primitive diet and custom; so are many souls well fed with such forms and dressings of religion, as would dis temper and misbecome us, and make us corrupt towards God, if any human circumstance moved it, and in the opinion of men, though none. You shall seldom see a coin, upon which the stamp were removed, though to imprint it better, but it looks awry and squint. And so, for the most part, do minds which have received divers impressions.

“ I will not, nor need to you, compare the religions. The channels of God’s mercies run through both fields; and they are sister teats of His graces, yet both diseased and infected, but not both alike. And I think, that as Copernicism in the mathematics hath carried earth farther up, from the stupid centre; and yet not honoured it, nor advantaged it, because for the necessity of appearances, it hath carried heaven so much higher from it; so the Roman

profession seems to exhale, and refine our wills from earthly drugs and lees, more than the Reformed, and so seems to bring us nearer heaven ; but then that carries heaven farther from us, by making us pass so many courts, and offices of saints in this life, in all our petitions, and lying in a painful prison in the next, during the pleasure, not of Him to whom we go, and who must be our Judge, but of them from whom we come, who know not our case. Sir, as I said last time, labour to keep your alacrity and dignity, in an even temper ; for in a dark sadness, indifferent things seem abominable or necessary, being neither ; as trees and sheep to melancholic night-walkers have unproper shapes. And when you descend to satisfy all men in your own religion, or to excuse others to all, you prostitute yourself and your understanding, though not a prey, yet a mark, and a hope, and a subject, for every sophister in religion to work on.

“ For the other part of your letter, spent in the praise of the Countess, I am always very apt to believe it of her, and can never believe it so well, and so reasonably, as now, when it is averred by you ; but for the expressing it to her, in that sort as you seem to counsel, I have these two reasons to decline it. That that knowledge which she hath of me, was in the beginning of a graver course than of a poet, into which (that I may also keep my dignity) I would not seem to relapse. The Spanish proverb informs me, that he is a fool which cannot make one sonnet, and he is mad which makes two. The other stronger reason, is my integrity to the other Countess, of whose worthiness, though I swallowed your opinion at first upon your words, yet I have had since an explicit faith, and now a knowledge ; and for her delight (since she descends to them) I had reserved not only all the verses which I should make, but all the thoughts of women’s worthiness. But because I hope she will not disdain that I should write well of her picture, I have obeyed you thus far as to write ; but entreat you by your friendship, that by this occasion of versifying I be not traduced, nor esteemed light in that tribe and that house where I have lived.

“ If those reasons which moved you to bid me write be not constant in you still, or if you meant not that I should write verses; or if these verses be too bad, or too good, over or under her understanding, and not fit, I pray receive them, as a companion and supplement of this letter to you; and as such a token as I use to send, which use, because I wish rather they should serve (except you wish otherwise) I send no other; but after I have told you, that here at a christening at Peckham you are remembered by divers of ours, and I commanded to tell you so, I kiss your hands, and so seal to you my pure love, which I would not refuse to do by any labour or danger.

“ Your very true friend and servant,

“ J. DONNE.”

1615

On the 23rd of April 1616 Shakespeare died. We are not aware that Donne had ever shown the very smallest interest in the most imperial of all his contemporaries. Nor would it be possible to connect his name in any way with that of Shakespeare, had not Sir Nicholas L'Estrange preserved, and attributed to Donne's relation, a rather pleasant anecdote:—

“ Shakespeare was godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children, and, after the christening, being in a deep study, Jonson came to cheer him up, and asked him why he was so melancholy. ‘ No faith, Ben,’ says he, ‘ not I, but I have been considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my godchild, and I have resolved at last.’ ‘ I prythee, what?’ says he. ‘ I’ faith, Ben, I’ll e’en give him a dozen good Latin (*latten*) spoons, and thou shalt translate them.’ ”

Donne's unquestioned intimacy with Ben Jonson makes it possible that he was told this little jest at first-hand.

The earliest of Donne's sermons which has reached us with a date attached to it is that which he preached before the Queen at Greenwich, on the 30th of April 1615. The text was, “ Thus saith the Lord, ye have sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money.” The sermon has nothing in it of great im-



*Antiquariorum Effigies vera, Qui post  
eam aetatem Sacris iniciatus Ec-  
clesia S<sup>t</sup> Pauli Decanus obiit.*

*Ano<sup>o</sup> Dom<sup>o</sup> 1631  
Etatis sua<sup>o</sup> 59<sup>o</sup>*

*Lombart Sculpsit*

### PORTRAIT OF JOHN DONNE

*From a Contemporary Engraving by PIETER LOMBART*



portance, and the thoughts of Anne of Denmark were probably distracted as she endeavoured to listen to it. She had spent an exciting week; she had checkmated Somerset by procuring the appointment of Villiers, henceforth Sir George, as Gentleman of the Bedchamber, on a salary of £1000 a year. The downfall of the Lord Chamberlain was now imminent, and his growing sense of insecurity soured his temper. But the crash was not to come for two or three months yet. Through this year Donne almost disappears from us; there is a break in his correspondence; we have to suppose that he was absorbed in making up for lost time, and in accustoming himself to the duties of his new position.

*“To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER, Gentleman  
of His Highness’s Bedchamber.”<sup>1</sup>*

“SIR,—I have always your leave to use my liberty, but now I must use my bondage. Which is my necessity of obeying a pre-contract laid upon me. I go to-morrow to Camberwell, a mile beyond Southwark. But from this town goes with me my brother Sir Thomas Grymes and his Lady, and I with them. There we dine well enough I warrant you, with his father-in-law, Sir Thomas Hunt. If I keep my whole promise, I shall preach both forenoon and afternoon. But I will obey your commandments for my return. If you cannot be there by ten, do not put yourself upon the way; for, sir, you have done me more honour than I can be worthy of, in missing me so diligently. I can hope to hear Mr. Moulin again; or ruminate what I have heretofore heard. The only miss that I shall have is of the honour of waiting upon you; which is somewhat recompensed, if thereby you take occasion of not putting yourself to that pain, to be more assured of the inabilities of

“Your unworthy servant,

“J. DONNE.”

[*June?* 1615.]

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

With Sir Thomas Grymes, Donne's wealthy brother-in-law at Peckham, we are already acquainted. Sir Thomas Hunt, of Foulsham, in Norfolk, was not the "father-in-law," but the stepfather of Sir Thomas Grymes, Lady Grymes the elder having married Hunt in second nuptials. Sir Thomas Hunt died on the 5th of January 1617. The celebrated French Protestant divine, Pierre du Moulin (Molinæus), preached before the King on the 6th of June 1615.

"And now all [Donne's] studies, which had been occasionally diffused, were all concentrated in Divinity. Now he had a new calling, new thoughts, and a new employment for his wit and eloquence. Now, all his earthly affections were changed into Divine love; and all the faculties of his own soul were engaged in the conversion of others; in preaching the glad tidings of remission to repenting sinners, and peace to each troubled soul. To these he applied himself with all care and diligence; and now such a change was wrought in him, that he could say with David, 'O how amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord God of Hosts!' Now he declared openly, 'that when he required a temporal, God gave him a spiritual blessing.' And that 'he was now gladder to be a door-keeper in the House of God, than he could be to enjoy the noblest of all temporal employments.'"

Walton has described Donne's delivery of his first sermon before the King in Whitehall. Much had been expected of him, but his eloquence exceeded the expectations of the court. He "preached the word so as showed his own heart was possessed with those very thoughts and joys that he laboured to distil into others: a preacher in earnest; weeping sometimes *for* his auditory, sometimes *with* them; always preaching to himself, like an angel *from* a cloud, but *in* none; carrying some, as St. Paul was, to heaven in holy raptures, and enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives: here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those that practised it; and a virtue so as to make it beloved, even by those who loved it not; and all this with a

most particular grace and an unexpressible addition of comeliness.”<sup>1</sup>

The history of Donne’s honorary degree at Cambridge is curious. Walton, in his rose-coloured way, narrates it thus:—

“ That summer, in the very same month in which he entered into sacred orders,<sup>2</sup> and was made the King’s chaplain, his Majesty then going his progress, was entreated to receive an entertainment in the University of Cambridge: and Mr. Donne attending his Majesty at that time, his Majesty was pleased to recommend him to the University, to be made Doctor in Divinity: Doctor [Samuel] Harsnett —after Archbishop of York—was then Vice-Chancellor, who, knowing him to be the author of that learned book the *Pseudo-Martyr*, required no other proof of his abilities, but proposed it to the University, who presently assented, and expressed a gladness, that they had such an occasion to entitle him to be theirs.”

But contemporary documents put a different complexion on the affair. The University of Cambridge was by no means so affable as Walton believed. Many courtiers were made M.A., but few doctors. Sir Dudley Carleton, writing to Chamberlain on the 16th of March 1615, says, that even the King’s entreaty for a doctor’s degree for John Donne will not prevail; “ the University is threatened with a mandate, which, if it come, it is like they will obey, but they are resolved to give him such a blow withal, that he were better without his degree.” Cambridge people would remember, what Walton evidently never knew, that Donne deserted them for Oxford in 1610. The Vice-Chancellor, who was a notorious stickler for academic etiquette, evidently considered that Donne ought to have favoured his old university, and, by paying his fees, have come into his Cambridge D.D. in the regular course. The King had arrived in Cambridge early in March, as a compliment to the Earl of Suffolk, who had, on the death of Northampton, been elected Chancellor of the University. It appears that the Cambridge degrees had been scandalously distributed, and

<sup>1</sup> “ Unimitable fashion of speaking,” 1640.

<sup>2</sup> “ The same month in which he was ordained priest,” 1640.

the Vice-Chancellor had determined to resist the easy and miscellaneous attainment of them. It was found that degrees had been, by intrigue or accident, given to tradesmen of a mean class, to barbers and to apothecaries, and when the King arrived, with his idle train of servants, the University drew itself jealously together. It shows us how little the world was, as yet, prepared to accept Donne as a Churchman that he should have been thus excluded from academic honours.

The King, however, was firm; he would not leave Cambridge until he was promised that Donne should be made a Doctor. With an extremely bad grace the University gave way, and on April 7, 1615, Chamberlain writes to Sir Dudley Carleton: "John Donne and one Cheke went out Doctors at Cambridge with much ado after our coming away by the King's express mandate, though the Vice-Chancellor and some other of the heads called them openly 'filios noctis' and 'tenebriones' that sought thus to come in at the window, when there was a fair gate open. But the worst is that Donne had gotten a reversion of the Deanery of Canterbury, if such grants would be lawful, whereby he hath purchased himself a great deal of envy, that a man of his sort should seek 'per saltum' to intercept such a place from so many more worthy and ancient Divines."

It is impossible to credit this story about the Deanery of Canterbury, but it is plain that Donne had yet to conquer the confidence and even the respect of those who were jealous of his gift and graces. We know not what to say of Walton's statement that, during his first year as a priest, Donne had "fourteen advowsons of several benefices presented to him," except that it is absolutely incredible. Walton adds that he refused them all, preferring to live in London, "to which place he had a natural inclination, having received both his birth and education in it, and there contracted a friendship with many whose conversation multiplied the joys of his life."

It appears that Donne's most kind and faithful friend, Lord Hay, considered that it was due to himself that

Donne originally took up the idea of entering the Church. "I think," he said, "that my persuasion first begat in you the purpose to employ your extraordinarily excellent part in the affairs of another world." Since 1613, Lord Hay had been Keeper of the Wardrobe; it was therefore appropriate that on New Year's Day 1615 (that is to say, March 25) he presented to the poet a "vesture" of the clerical profession, doubtless of a very handsome character. Perhaps the following letter belongs to a slightly later period, and refers to Donne's wish to be the King's chaplain:—

“To the Lord Hay.



“Though I had much desire to seek your Lordship, yet I abstained when I knew, upon how just reason your Lordship had retired yourself. But since your Lordship hath given so able a trial of your excellency that you can suspend your servant's grief and make it yield to public joy and triumph, I dare appear before your Lordship in this letter, and repeat that suit, which I made to your Lordship last year. I humbly therefore beseech your Lordship to take some time to move his Majesty before he go out of town, that I may be his servant, which request, though I hope you shall not find difficult nor unseasonable, yet I prefer it to your Lordship without any restraint of time or place, or other circumstance; and having told your Lordship my desire, leave all the rest to your leisure and knowledge, for my fortune is nowhere so safe as in your Lordship's hands, which I humbly kiss, and deliver over into them the faith and services of your most humble servant.”

While we attempt somewhat unsuccessfully to trace the outlines of Donne's career in this first dim period of his clerical life, an amusing flash of light comes to us out of the far East. That strange creature, Tom Coryat of Odcombe, in the county of Somerset, whom we have seen Donne teasing in earlier years, had published in 1611 his famous *Crudities*, and had gone forth vaguely, “some-

✓ Matthew Job, Collection

where east of Suez," whence it seemed very likely that he would never be heard of again. But towards the end of 1615 he began to be audible once more in greetings to the English wits from the capital of the Great Mogul. On the 8th of November 1615 Coryat wrote a facetious letter from Agra, "the Umbelick of Oriental India," addressed to about twenty-five friends in England, members of "the Right Worshipful Fraternity of Sireniacal Gentlemen that meet the first Friday of every month, at the sign of the Mermaid in Bread Street in London." He addresses these friends as "Right Generous, Jovial and Mercurial Sireniacks," and each is greeted with a separate complimentary invocation. The fifth in the list is "Mr. John Donne, the author of two most elegant Latin books, *Pseudo-Martyr* [which was not in Latin at all] and *Ignatiij Conclave* : of his abode either in the Strand or elsewhere in London ; I think you shall be easily informed by the means of my friend L. [R.?] W. [Rowland Woodward?]." Among the other "mercurial sireniacks" are enumerated Ben Jonson, Sir Robert Cotton, Christopher Brooke, Sir Richard Martin, Sir John Hoskins, George Gerrard, William Hakewill, and Inigo Jones, all known to us already as friends of Donne. This is the principal, and indeed the only, authority existing for the statement that Donne attended the meetings at the Mermaid. News travelled slowly to Agra, and we see that Tom Coryat had no suspicion that Donne had been a clergyman for nearly a year when he wrote this facetious epistle.

These months must have been a time of anxiety and distress to Donne. From his position at court, he was obliged to witness the various stages of the fall of the favourite who had helped himself to rise. The disgrace of Somerset had already been decided on, when, in September 1615, the circumstances of the horrid murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, by the woman who was now the Countess of Somerset, began to come to light. She was accused of the crime, and her husband was inculpated also. It is now generally believed that Somerset, though abominably careless in the matter, was not actually privy to the poisoning of Overbury, but his attitude under the accusations of

Weston and Rawlins was so injudicious, that his case was prejudged in the popular mind. The Earl and Countess were ordered to remain in their rooms on the 17th of October, and Weston's trial immediately began. This was the first link in the long chain which dragged so many great names down with it. It closed with the verdicts in May 1616, by which Lord and Lady Somerset were found guilty of murder; they were placed in the Tower, under the charge of Donne's father-in-law, Sir George More, and they remained there until 1622. It is curious, and it is extremely fortunate, that, in consideration of Donne's activity in arranging documentary evidence for the nullity suit, his name did not come up in the course of these horrible and complicated investigations. His connection with it seems to have been forgotten; yet I cannot but think that it may explain the fact that until the very year before his death, Donne, the most famous preacher in England, and the first of living divines, was not offered a bishopric.

On the day this next letter was written, Charles, Duke of York, who was just completing his sixteenth year, was created Prince of Wales. Donne was prevented from witnessing the ceremony:—

“*To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER.<sup>1</sup>*

“SIR,—I was loth to be the only man who should have no part in this great festival; I thought, therefore, to celebrate that well by spending some part of it in your company. This made me seek you again this afternoon, though I were guilty to myself of having done so every day since your coming. I confess such an importunity is worthy to be punished with such a missing; yet, because it is the likeliest reparation of my fortunes to hope upon reversions, I would be glad of that title in you; that, after solemnities, and businesses, and pleasures be passed over, my time may come, and you may afford some of your last leisures to

“Your affectionate and humble servant,

“J. DONNE.

“4 November [1616].”

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

The only surviving sister of Donne, Mrs. Llyl, died about 1616. This sister, Anne, who was considerably the poet's senior, had in 1586 married a gentleman of an old Catholic family of Yorkshire, Mr. Avery Copley. He did not live long, and in 1594 she married again, a Mr. William Lillie or Llyl. Mrs. Donne, the elder, had also changed her name twice, having married a man named Symmings, and at his death a third husband, Richard Rainsforth or Rainsford. Of these marriages nothing further is known,<sup>1</sup> but we are to suppose that in 1616 Elizabeth Rainsforth found herself comfortably settled in a humble way. No wonder her life seemed to her son to have been troubled by a continual tempest. He was now the only survivor of her six children, and she had lost all the considerable fortune which her mother, Mrs. Lewin, and her first husband had left her. Forty years had elapsed since the decease of Mr. Donne, and they had sufficed to disperse all the wealth of the family.

To his mother, comforting her after the death of her daughter, Anne Llyl:—

*“To ELIZABETH RAINSFORTH.”<sup>2</sup>*

“MY MOST DEAR MOTHER,—When I consider so much of your life as can fall within my memory and observation, I find it to have been a sea, under a continual tempest, where one wave hath ever overtaken another. Our most wise and blessed Saviour chooseth what way it pleaseth Him to conduct those which He loves to His haven and eternal rest. The way which He hath chosen for you is strait, stormy, obscure, and full of sad apparitions of death and wants, and sundry discomforts; and it hath pleased Him, that one discomfort should still succeed and touch another, that He might leave you no leisure, by any pleasure or abundance, to stay or step out of that way, or almost to take breath in that way, by which He hath determined to bring you home, which is His glorious kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> A family of Rainsforths was connected with the Geodyers of Polesworth.

<sup>2</sup> From the Tobie Matthew collection.

“One of the most certain marks and assurances, that all these are His works, and to that good end, is your inward feeling and apprehension of them, and patience in them. As long as the Spirit of God distils and dews His cheerfulness upon your heart, as long as He instructs your understanding to interpret His mercies and His judgments aright, so long your comfort must needs be as much greater than others as your afflictions are greater than theirs. The happiness which God afforded to your first young time, which was the love and care of my most dear and provident father, whose soul, I hope, hath long since enjoyed the sight of our blessed Saviour, and had compassion of all our miseries in the world, God removed from you quickly, and hath since taken from you all the comfort that that marriage produced. All those children (for whose maintenance his industry provided, and for whose education you were so carefully and so chargeably diligent) He hath now taken from you. All that wealth which he left, God hath suffered to be gone from us all; so that God hath seemed to repent, that He allowed any part of your life any earthly happiness; that He might keep your soul in continual exercise, and longing, and assurance of coming immediately to Him.

“I hope, therefore, my most dear mother, that your experience of the calamities of this life, your continual acquaintance with the visitations of the Holy Ghost, which gives better inward comforts than the world can outward discomforts, your wisdom to distinguish the value of this world from the next, and your religious fear of offending our merciful God by repining at anything which He doeth, will preserve you from any inordinate and dangerous sorrow for the loss of my most beloved sister. For my part, which am only left now to do the office of a child, though the poorness of my fortune, and the greatness of my charge, hath not suffered me to express my duty towards you as became me; yet I protest to you before Almighty God and His angels and saints in heaven, that I do, and ever shall, esteem myself to be as strongly bound to look to you and provide for your relief, as for my own poor wife and children.

“For whatsoever I shall be able to do I acknowledge to be a debt to you from whom I had that education which must make my fortune. This I speak not as though I feared my father Rainsford’s care of you, or his means to provide for you; for he hath been with me, and as I perceive in him a loving and industrious care to give you contentment, so, I see in his business a happy and considerable forwardness. In the meantime, good mother, take heed that no sorrow nor dejection in your heart interrupt or disappoint God’s purpose in you; His purpose is to remove out of your heart all such love of this world’s happiness as might put Him out of possession of it. He will have you entirely, and as God is comfort enough, so He is inheritance enough. Join with God and make His visitations and afflictions as He intended them, mercies and comforts: And for God’s sake pardon those negligences which I have heretofore used towards you; and assist me with your blessing to me, and all mine; and with your prayers to our blessed Saviour, that thereby both my mind and fortune may be apt to do all my duties, especially those that belong to you.

“God, whose omnipotent strength can change the nature of anything by His raising-spirit of comfort, make your poverty riches, your afflictions pleasure, and all the gall and wormwood of your life honey and manna to your taste, which He hath wrought whensoever you are willing to have it so. Which, because I cannot doubt in you, I will forbear more lines at this time, and most humbly deliver myself over to your devotions and good opinion of me, which I desire no longer to live than I may have.”

In the spring of 1616 Donne was presented to the living of Keyston, a very small village in Huntingdonshire, between Thrapston and Kimbolton; and in July of the same year he became rector of Sevenoaks, in Kent. He never resided in either parish, although he held Keyston until 1622 and Sevenoaks until the end of his life. The latter benefice was in the gift of the Crown, and this was doubtless the mode in which James I. paid his chaplain; it was

richly endowed, and from the date of this appointment we are not to think of Donne as in any straits about money. Dr. Jessopp has some interesting remarks on the way in which the holding of a plurality of cures was regarded by the contemporary conscience :—

“ In those days the holder of a benefice was considered to have done his duty to the parish from which he derived his income, if he took due care that the ordinary ministrations of divine service in the sanctuary were adequately provided for, and the parsonage occupied by a curate who ministered to the necessities and spiritual wants of the people. There was no feeling against a man of learning and eminence holding two or more livings in plurality. It was thought better that a clergyman of great gifts should be supported out of the surplus income of a rich benefice, and allowed to exercise his talents in a sphere which needed his personal presence and influence, rather than that he should be buried in a country village where he would be likely to live and die forgotten and unknown.”

Preferment followed preferment in the course of the year 1616. Dr. Thomas Holloway,<sup>1</sup> a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, had been appointed Divinity Reader to the Benchers of Lincoln’s Inn in 1611. He now died ; and on the 24th of October 1616, the Masters of the Bench elected Donne to fill his place. This was one of the most active as well as the most lucrative posts open to a London clergyman. The order of the Bench says that “ Master Doctor Donne is at this council chosen to be Divinity Reader of this house, and is to have the like entertainment that Master Doctor Holloway had ; he is to preach every Sabbath day in the term, both forenoon and afternoon, and once the Sabbath days before and after every term, and on the Grand Days every forenoon, and in the reading times, who is to take place next the Double Readers that have now read, or hereafter shall read, or hereafter shall fine for their double readings.” Dr. Jessopp has estimated that Donne’s

<sup>1</sup> Izaak Walton was mistaken in believing Dr. Gataker to have been Donne’s immediate predecessor. Thomas Gataker was Divinity Reader from 1601 until 1611, when he was appointed to the rectory of Rotherhithe. Walton, too, places Donne’s election after, instead of ten months before, the death of his wife.

duty involved the preparation of not fewer than fifty sermons a year, long addresses suited to an audience of learned and critical hearers. Walton tells us that Donne was "most glad to renew his intermittent friendship with those whom he so much loved, and where he had been a Saul—though not to persecute Christianity, or to deride it, yet in his irregular youth to neglect the visible practice of it—there to become a Paul, and preach salvation to his beloved brethren.

"And now his life was a shining light among his old friends; now he gave an ocular testimony of the strictness and regularity of it; now he might say, as St. Paul adviseth his Corinthians, 'Be ye followers of me, as I follow Christ, and walk as ye have me for an example'; not the example of a busybody, but of a contemplative, a harmless, an humble and an holy life and conversation.

"The love of that noble Society was expressed to him many ways; for, besides fair lodgings that were set apart, and newly furnished for him with all necessaries, other courtesies were also daily added; indeed so many and so freely, as if they meant their gratitude should exceed his merits; and in this love-strife of desert and liberality they continued for the space of two years, he preaching faithfully and constantly to them, and they liberally requiting them." In 1617 he laid the first stone of their new chapel, which it took six years to complete. This is the building at present used by the Society.

Three months after Donne's ordination, on the 2nd of April 1615, his patron, Sir Robert Drury, died, at the age of thirty-eight. We have to suppose that Donne had already given up his rooms in Drury House. What became of his wife and children during the next year we do not know. But with the appointments of 1616, Donne's anxieties about money matters must have been brought to a permanent conclusion. For the rest of his life he was a comfortable and almost a wealthy man. But the change came too late to restore health to the worn-out frame of his wife. She died, seven days after giving birth to a still-born child, on the 15th of August 1617. Of the twelve children she had borne to

Donne, seven were still alive. Of these, Constance, who was in her fifteenth year, would be old enough to begin to keep house for her father. John, who was a year younger, was being educated at Westminster School. George was but twelve, and Lucy nine, while the youngest, Elizabeth, had been baptized scarcely a year before, on the 14th of June 1616. This was the tender family, of ages the most responsible and hazardous, which now fell on the charge of their anxious father. It is to be noted, as evidence of his care, that though five had died in infancy, of these remaining seven, all lived on, and, except Lucy, all survived their father. To those of his children who were old enough to understand his assurance, he gave a promise that he would never marry again, and this he faithfully kept, "burying with his tears all his earthly joys in his most dear and deserving wife's grave, and betook himself to a most retired and solitary life."

Donne buried his wife in the Church of St. Clement Danes, and raised over her a monument, for which he gave a commission to the most eminent sculptor of the day, Nicholas Stone. He was a young Devonshire man, who had recently come back from a thorough training in architectural sculpture under Pieter de Keyser in Amsterdam, and who had immediately fallen into a large and indeed almost exclusive practice. His picturesque, mannered work is closely identified with our ideas of Jacobean ornament. For Mrs. Donne's monument Stone was paid "fifteen pieces"; it was therefore, no doubt, an elaborate composition of his characteristic class, with coloured figures of the lady, her husband, and her children in a vanishing perspective. Nothing could have been more interesting to us than to contemplate such a memorial at this step in our narrative; but, unhappily, when the church was rebuilt, the tomb of Anne Donne fell to pieces or was destroyed. But there exists at Loseley, in Donne's handwriting, this draft of the inscription which the poet composed for the monument, and submitted to the criticism of Sir George More:—

## ANNÆ

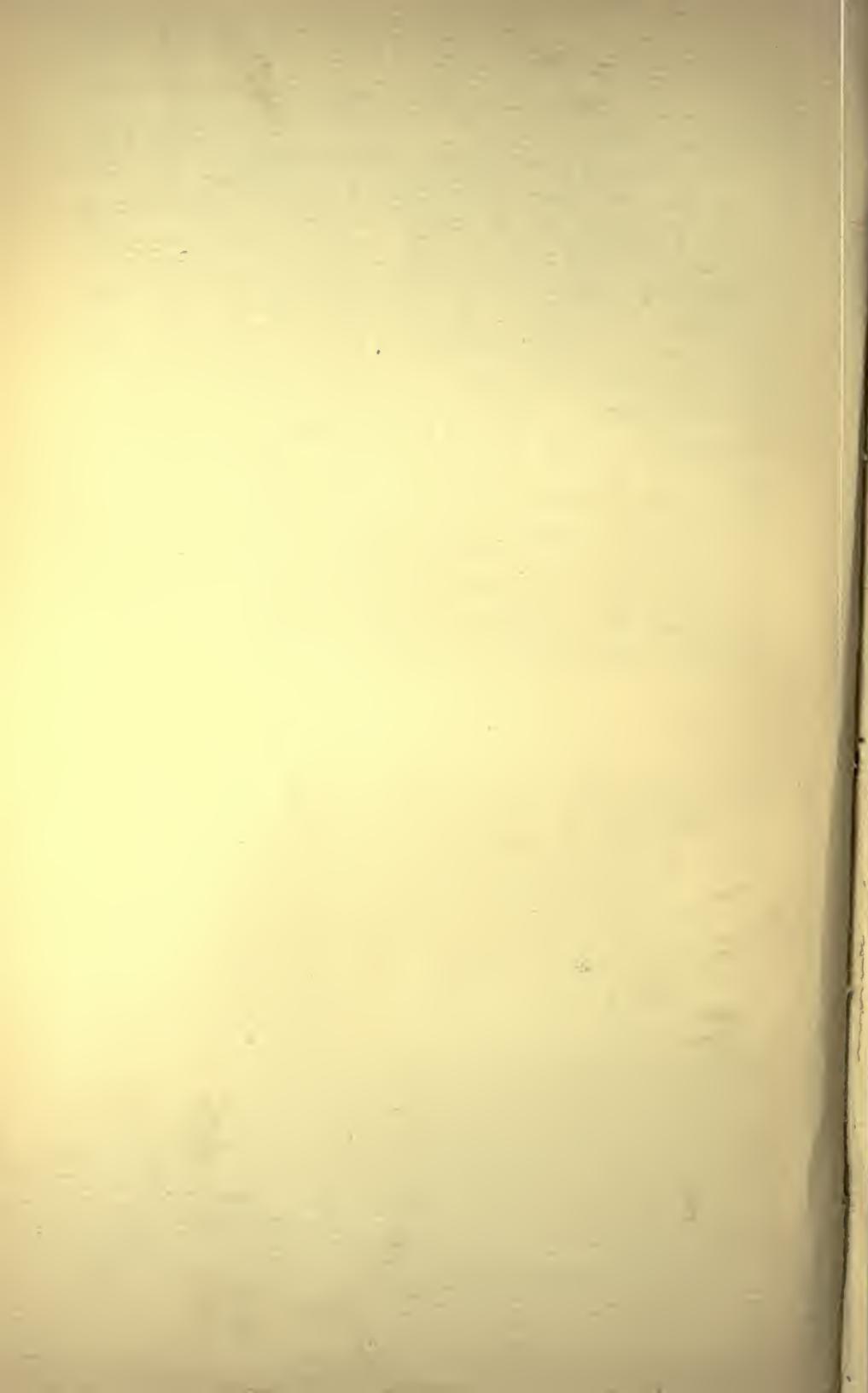
GEORGII	MORE de	}	filia soror nept. pronept.
ROBERT :	Lothesley		
WILLELMI	Equit.		
CHRISTOPHERI	Aurat.		

Feminæ lectissimæ dilectissimæque  
 Conjugi charissimæ castissimæque  
 Matri piissimæ indulgentissimæque  
 xv annis in conjugio transactis,  
 vii post xii partum (quorum vii superstant) dies,  
 immanni febre correptæ,  
 (quod hoc saxum fari jussit  
 ipse pro dolore infans)  
 maritus (miserrimum dictu) olim charæ charus  
 cineribus cineres spondet suos,  
 novo matrimonio (annuat Deus) hoc loco sociandos,  
 JOHANNES DONNE  
 Sacr : Theolog : Profess :.  
 Secessit  
 A° xxxiii ætat. et sui Jesu  
 CIO. DC. XVII.  
 Aug. xv.

The first time Donne left his house after the funeral of his wife, it was to preach a sermon at the church of St. Clement Danes, where she was buried. So, at least, Walton declares, but the printed copy which has come down to us says that it was delivered at St Dunstan's. The text is from *Lamentations* iii. 1 : "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath." Walton's accounts of this discourse is pretty, but too sentimental to be accepted; "indeed, his very words and looks testified him to be truly such a man" [as the prophet Jeremiah describes]; "and they, with the addition of his sighs and tears expressed in his sermon, did so work upon the affections of his hearers, as melted and moulded them into a companionable sadness; and so they left the congregation; but then *their* houses presented them with objects of diversion, and *his* presented him with nothing but fresh objects of sorrow, in beholding many helpless children, a narrow

fortune, and a consideration of the many cares and casualties that attend their education."

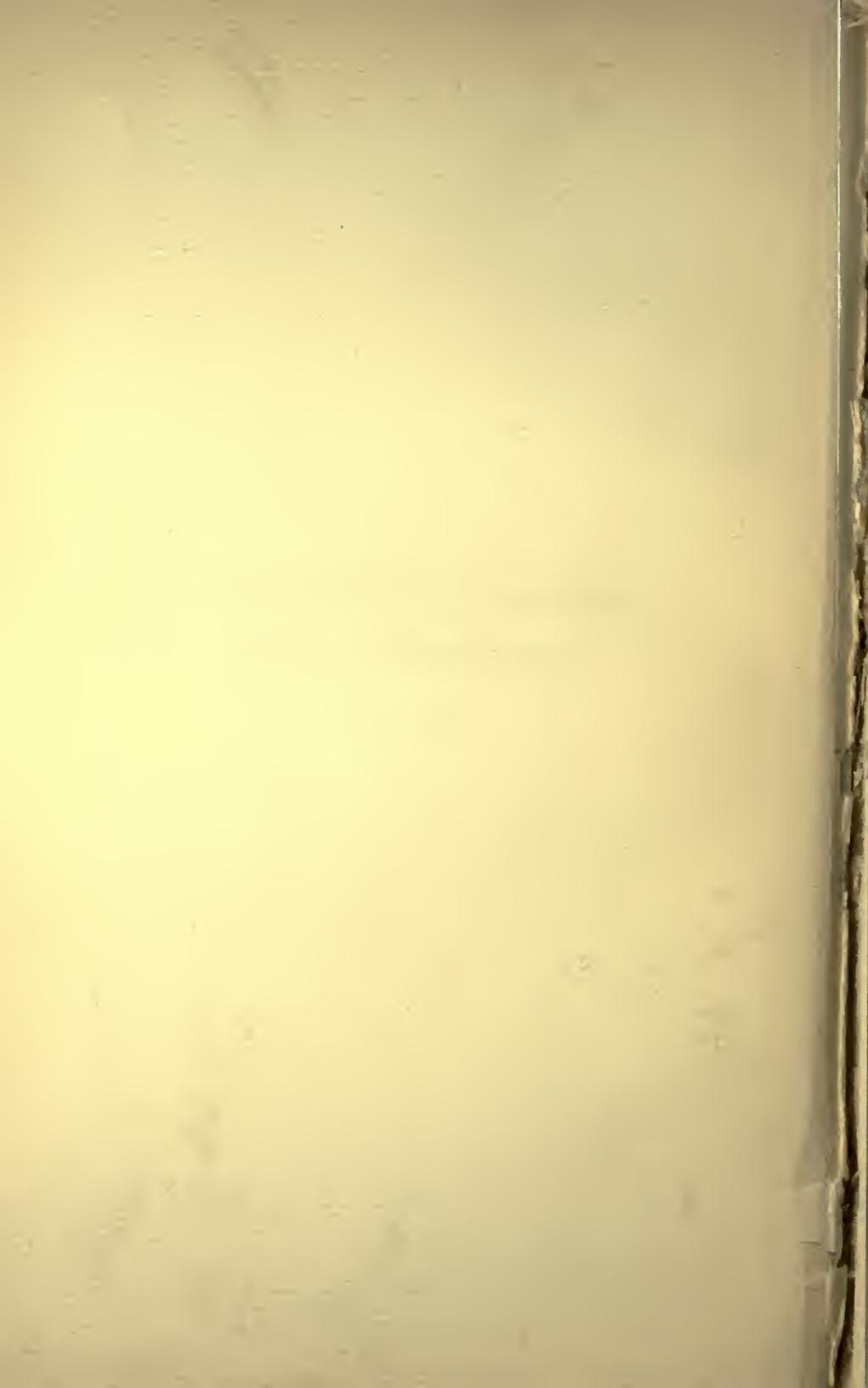
This picture is overcharged. Walton supposed that Mrs. Donne died two years earlier than was the case; in 1617 the poet's fortune was no longer "narrow." Moreover, an examination of the sermon itself reveals no such emotional or hysterical appeals to sympathy as the sentimental genius of Walton conceived. It is a very dignified and calm address on the mode in which we should endure the afflictions with which God sees it fitting to chastise us. Not one word, however, applies the text or his exhortations to the speaker himself; no one would guess, from any personal emotion or parade of grief, that the preacher was more afflicted than the rest of the race of man. In no sense is this sermon a funeral oration over Anne Donne, or a record of the preacher's loss. Rather, after shutting himself up in his house until the bitterness of his anguish was over, we see Donne here putting his bereavement behind him, and resuming, with stately impassibility, his priestly task.



READER AT LINCOLN'S INN

THE GERMAN TOUR

1617-1621



## CHAPTER XII

### READER AT LINCOLN'S INN

1617-1621

THOSE who are in the habit of observing the religious life of others with attention are familiar, in whatever temper they may regard it, with the spiritual phenomenon which is known as "conversion." It is not a matter of conviction or works, though the first may produce and the second result from it; nor is it in any degree universal among those who are eminent for piety and unction. It may come to the most and to the least instructed; it is a state of soul, a psychological condition abruptly reached by some, and not reached at all by many. Some pass into it who afterwards pass out again into indifferentism; some never experience the sudden advent of it, although their fidelity to the faith persists unshaken. There is abundant evidence to show that this condition or crisis was passed through by Donne in the winter of 1617; that at that time he became "converted" in the intense and incandescent sense. At that juncture, under special conditions, and at the age of forty-four, he dedicated himself anew to God with a peculiar violence of devotion, and witnessed the dayspring of a sudden light in his soul.

The statement must not be adopted without our casting back our thoughts upon what Donne's spiritual life had been up to this date. Our acceptance of it involves the acknowledgment that in the three years which had elapsed since he gave way to the King's wishes and took orders, he had not been what he now became and remained throughout the rest of his life. Are we, then, to say that when Donne accepted the profession of the Church he was an insincere and ungodly man? A thousand times, no!

The lamp had long been there, brimming with pure oil ; the wick was trimmed ; in the general array of the English Church in that age it passed as an efficient illuminator. Even Donne himself probably perceived imperfectly and intermittently, that the light which flashed from its well-tended curves was but reflected from the lamps around it. But now the match was to be laid to the threads ; now it was to be no merely decent and conventional transmission of the light of others, but a blazing and crescent beacon, a centre of independent radiance.

To many natures, perhaps to most, religion enters by way of the emotions. But with Donne the opposite was the case ; his intellect was gained to the service of God while still his heart was cold. We have had to observe the frigidity of his early religious poetry, appealing exclusively to the intelligence, preferring every species of learned ingenuity to a genuine cry of experience. We have seen that, in his controversial writings in prose, he wrote like a lawyer rather than a divine, persistently evading and ignoring the inner struggle, the plastic quality of the individual soul. It is in remembering these evidences of his too exclusively intellectual habit of mind that we are able to explain the inconsistencies of Donne's early life. He was very slowly called to the threshold of the Holy of Holies, very slowly prepared for the perfect life, and yet, in a certain sense, he believed himself prepared and called from the outset. So that we see him, to our surprise and scandal, if we judge hastily, able to say that from the age of twenty he had seriously surveyed and considered "the body of divinity," while we find him, long after that time, living a life without humility or reserve, and even, in his hot youth, without the outward decencies and rudimentary principles of piety. With Donne, an intellectual curiosity as to theological questions long preceded any subjection of his brain or heart to that conduct of life logically involved by them. With no suspicion of insincerity, he was a practised theologian before he could make any pretence to being a Christian man.

But, as time went by and the turmoil of his instincts

was quieted, crisis after crisis brought Donne nearer and nearer to the religious life. His marriage, and the shock to his fortunes produced by it; his secretarial work for Morton; each of his serious attacks of illness; each proof he had of declining physical vivacity; brought him nearer and nearer to the state of grace, lowering the material and heightening the spiritual part of him. More or less distinctly he was himself aware of his coldness, aware that what he was willing enough to hold out towards the altar was as yet in no sense a burning sacrifice. And, without question, this self-knowledge was at the base of the long vacillation and delay in adopting the obvious and, at last, entirely inevitable profession of priest. When the King insisted, and the call could no longer be refused, there was nothing in Donne's creed, or temper, or attitude to the Church which could by any possibility be objected to, although, as we have seen, there was a certain worldliness of demeanour which his enemies at Cambridge and elsewhere were not unwilling to exaggerate. Still, to all outward appearance, John Donne in 1615 was a suitable recipient of that ecclesiastical preferment with which the King, himself occupied solely with the intellectual part of religion, was anxious to reward Donne's meritorious learning.

It was the loss of his wife which brought about the final process of sanctification and illumination. Her death, the result of a childbirth, from which she was too weak to recover, was an unexpected blow. The morbid strain in Donne's temperament asserted itself at first, as it often does in such cases. He shrank from all communication with his friends; he nursed his grief by staying at home in solitary despair, or by darkening with his presence the group of his motherless little children. The picturesque description which Walton has given us of this crisis in his life can only have been supplied to him by Donne himself. It is, indeed, so much in the later manner of Donne that we may be tempted to believe that it represents, in the main, the very language which he employed to describe the effects of his bereavement:—"In this retiredness, which was often from the sight of his dearest friends, he became *crucified to the*

*world*, and all those vanities, those imaginary pleasures, that are daily acted on that restless stage ; and they were as perfectly crucified to him. Nor is it hard to think (being passions may be both changed and heightened by accidents) but that that abundant affection which once was betwixt him and her, who had long been the delight of his eyes, and the companion of his youth ; her, with whom he had divided so many pleasant sorrows and contented fears, as common people are not capable of ; not hard to think but that she being now removed by death, a commensurable grief took as full a possession of him as joy had done ; and so indeed it did : for now his very soul was elemented of nothing but sadness ; now grief took so full a possession of his heart, as to leave no place for joy ; if it did, it was a joy to be alone, where, like a *pelican in the wilderness*, he might bemoan himself without witness or restraint, and pour forth his passions like Job in the days of his affliction : ‘O that I might have the desire of my heart ! O that God would grant the thing that I long for ! For then, *as the grave is become her house*, so I would hasten to make it mine also : *that we two might there make our beds together in the dark.*’ Thus, as the Israelites sat mourning by the rivers of Babylon, when they remembered Sion, so he gave some ease to his oppressed heart by thus venting his sorrows : thus he began the day and ended the night ; ended the restless night, and began the weary day in lamentations.”

Among the crude theological scraps which the younger Donne published in 1651, and attributed to the time just before his father entered Holy Orders, he inserted some prayers which seem to have no connection with the rest. One of these appears to me to belong to the great spiritual crisis which we have just been considering. It has never been unearthed from the very dull *Essays in Divinity* in which it is buried, and may be given here, in part, as illustrating the spiritual condition of Donne’s later years, even if it be not, as I conjecture it to be, a composition of the exact period that we have reached :—

“O keep and defend my tongue from misusing Thy Name in lightness, passion, or falsehood ; and my heart

from mistaking Thy nature by an inordinate preferring Thy justice before Thy mercy, or advancing this before that. And as, though Thyself hadst no beginning, Thou gavest a beginning to all things in which Thou wouldest be served and glorified ; so, though this soul of mine, by which I partake Thee, begin not now, yet let this minute, O God, this happy minute of Thy visitation, be the beginning of her conversion, and shaking away confusion, darkness, and barrenness. Let her now produce creatures, thoughts, words, and deeds agreeable to Thee. And let her not produce them, O God, out of any contemplation or (I cannot say *idea*, but) *chimæra* of my worthiness, either because I am a man and no worm, and within the pale of Thy Church and not in the wild forest, and enlightened with some glimmerings of natural knowledge, but merely out of nothing. . . .

“ Let my soul’s creatures have that temper and harmony, that they be not, by a misdevout consideration of the next life, stupidly and treacherously negligent of the offices and duties which Thou enjoinest amongst us in this life ; nor so anxious in these that the other,—which is our better business, though this also must be attended,—be the less endeavoured. And because in this world my body was first made and then my soul, but in the next my soul shall be first and then my body, in my exterior and moral conversations let my first and presentest care be to give them satisfaction with whom I am mingled, because they may be scandalised, but Thou, who seest hearts, canst not ; but, for my faith, let my first relation be to Thee, because of that Thou art justly jealous, which they cannot be.”

In the last quoted paragraph Donne seems to have revealed to us the very sources of the conduct which we shall be called upon to observe in the remainder of his earthly pilgrimage, the impulses which led him to be so graciously and subtly all things to all men, while never flinching from the narrow path and steep which led him up to the very throne of God. So, in the *Paradiso*, Dante sees the saints flashing with sympathy and joy as they bend towards one another, each fixed in his eternal seat on some

petal of the Empyrean Rose, each palpably delighted with the presence of the others, and yet all gazing without interruption on the Beatific Vision.

The immediate result of Donne's recovery from the depression caused by his wife's death, and of his subsequent ecstasy of spiritual life, was the composition of two cycles of sonnets. The shorter series, entitled *La Corona*, is worthy of close study from those who desire to comprehend Donne's new attitude to religion. He offers to God this

“crown of prayer and praise  
Weaved in my lone devout melancholy,”

but the ambition of being a poet in the sight of the world has entirely passed away—

“—— do not with a vile crown of frail bays  
Reward my Muse's white sincerity;  
But what Thy thorny crown gain'd, that give me,  
A crown of glory, which doth flower always.”

He feels a new heart in his breast, a new ambition fires him. That which has so long evaded the ingenious theologian glows within the newly awakened man of simple faith; he has discovered at last the only goal worth striving for—

“The first, last end, now zealously possess'd,  
With a strong sober thirst my soul attends.  
'Tis time that heart and voice be lifted high;  
Salvation to all that will is nigh.”

In the succeeding sonnets, linked together by the artifice that each one begins with a repetition of the line with which its predecessor ended, Donne surveys the career of Christ—the Annunciation, the Nativity, in the Temple, on the Cross, the Resurrection, the Ascension. The soul is to follow the ethereal Pilgrim, asking no questions, to

“Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go.”

The poet has a singular reflection in reference to his own slow processes of conversion. There are those whose nature putrifies, and turns into the horror of sin. His has

not been so ; it has merely hardened, its vitality has been arrested in a long sleep. It needs a drop of Christ's blood to melt it from that stony hardness, to rouse it from that paralysing slumber, else it will remain faultless, but dead,

“Nor can by other means be glorified.”

But that exquisite drop has fallen, and has transfused the slumberer's apathy into ecstasy, so that, rising, he is able to

“Salute the last and everlasting day.”

The close of *La Corona* is striking, both spiritually and poetically—

“O, strong Ram, which has batter'd Heaven for me,  
Mild Lamb, which with Thy blood hast mark'd the path,  
Bright Torch, which shin'st, that I the way may see,  
O ! with Thy own blood quench Thy own just wrath !  
And, if Thy Holy Spirit my Muse did raise,  
Deign at my hands this crown of prayer and praise.”

There was published in 1633, as a “verse-letter,” a sonnet addressed “to E. of D.,” of which Mr. E. K. Chambers was the first to perceive the import. This is a prelude to *La Corona*, and was written before that cycle was quite complete, since it speaks of the seventh sonnet having “still some maim.” There is at present no “maim” or technical imperfection, unless, indeed, the rhymes “way” and “away” should be so considered. The letters “E. of D.” obviously mean “Earl of Doncaster.” There never was an Earl of Doncaster, but Lord Hay was, on the 5th of July 1618, created Viscount Doncaster. This remained his title until September 13, 1622, when he was created Earl of Carlisle. It is plain, then, that the letters “E. of D.” were not applied by the hand of Donne himself, for he would not have addressed a viscount, who was one of his closest friends, as an earl. We are therefore exempted from having to believe that Lord Hay was Lord Doncaster when *La Corona* was being composed, and we may confidently conclude that this cycle of sonnets belongs to 1617.

Greater uncertainty has hitherto accompanied the most important of Donne's spiritual poems, the cycle of *Holy Sonnets*. A letter to Magdalen Herbert, which has been published in its place in the present memoir, dated July 11, 1607, speaks of "enclosed holy hymns and sonnets," but Walton, in quoting this letter, says that these poems "are now lost to us." Mr. Chambers has found that to a MS. copy of *La Corona* and *Holy Sonnets*<sup>1</sup> there is appended a statement that they were "made twenty years since," but as the date of the MS. is unknown, this helps us little. Conjecture is, however, set at rest by the discovery of the seventeenth sonnet, beginning—

"Since she, whom I loved, hath paid her last debt  
To Nature, and to hers and my good is dead,  
And her soul early into heav'n ravishéd,  
Wholly on heavenly things my mind is set,"

which settles any doubt as to the *Holy Sonnets* being subsequent to August 1617. Internal evidence, I think, points to 1617 (or 1618 at latest) as the year of their composition.

The *Holy Sonnets*, which are nineteen in number, have never, until now,<sup>2</sup> been printed in complete form. Twelve were published in 1633; four more were added in 1635, and the entire series is complete only in the Westmoreland MS. In the last-named there are not merely numerous variations of the text, some of them absolutely luminous, but the entire order of the sonnets is altered, much, as I think, to the advantage of their intelligibility. I have, therefore, thought it well to give, in an appendix to the present volume, the Westmoreland text, with a careful collation of the 1633 and 1635 editions.

We know from Walton that Donne's life at this time was as a shining light among his old friends. This radiance beams from the *Holy Sonnets*, where the voice of personal emotion is more clearly audible than anywhere else in the religious poetry of Donne. The accent is that of a man who has discovered the truth so late, and has

<sup>1</sup> Harl., 4955.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C.

such a sense of the passage of time and of the nearness of his dissolution, that he hardly dares to hope that he may yet work for God. But he pours himself out in prayer to be preserved a little longer to serve his Lord and Master. Rarely was the natural language of the heart sustained so long by Donne in his verse as in this noble sonnet, which opens the series as it is now usually printed, but which was not published until 1635—

“Thou hast made me, and shall Thy work decay?  
 Repair me now, for now my end doth haste ;  
 I run to death, and death meets me as fast,  
 And all my pleasures are like yesterday.  
 I dare not move my dim eyes any way ;  
 Despair behind, and Death before, doth cast  
 Such terror, and my feeble flesh doth waste  
 By sin in it, which it towards hell doth weigh.  
 Only Thou art above, and when towards Thee  
 By Thy leave I can look, I rise again ;  
 But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,  
 That not one hour myself I can sustain.  
 Thy grace may wing me to prevent his art  
 And Thou like adamant draw mine iron heart.”

He attributes his condition of mind, softened and crushed so as to receive the impress of God's signet, to the agony caused by his bereavement. But he fears lest this natural affection may have taken an excessive fleshly form, may have been “idolatry.” Yet this temporal sorrow has wrought in him a “holy discontent,” which is obviously salutary. Thrown out of the comfortable security of domestic life, he falls, he is bruised, but only to be lifted tenderly by the Divine hands. Nor is “vehement grief” the only cause of the helpless physical condition in which he finds himself. Not bereavement only, but “sickness, death's herald and champion,” has assailed him. As he reflects upon his frailty, his old intellectual ingenuity comes back to him ; we are startled at the sudden cry—

“I am a little world made cunningly  
 Of elements, and an angelic sprite ;  
 But black sin hath betray'd to endless night  
 My world's both parts, and oh ! both parts must die.”

He calls on the discoverers of America to lend him their new seas to add to the old, and make a flood deep enough to quench the fires of lust and envy before they have consumed his soul away, since he wishes to save as much of that soul as possible to be the prey of a very different conflagration, the zeal of the Lord and of His house burning him up.

With strenuous abhorrence he repudiates the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and for the future his life shall be dedicated wholly to God. But, he reflects again, how little of that wasted life is left! This is his "play's last scene," his "pilgrimage's last mile," his "span's last inch." He conceives that death is absolutely upon him, and he breaks forth into a burst of almost Miltonic magnificence—

"At the round earth's imagined corners blow  
 Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise  
 From death, you numberless infinities  
 Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go;  
 All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrew,  
 All whom war, death, age, agues, tyrannies,  
 Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you, whose eyes  
 Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe."

But he has no sooner summoned this cloud of witnesses than he considers again how unready he is, with no day's work done, to join the cohorts. In the course of the argument, we reach another phrase, which it is difficult indeed to believe that Milton did not read and recollect—

"that tree  
 Whose fruit threw death on else-immortal us."

From this he passes to one of those invocations of Death himself, which were peculiarly in the spirit of the age—

"Death, be not proud, though some have callèd thee  
 Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so."

In this there seems to be more than an accidental resemblance to the famous appeal to "eloquent, just, and mighty Death," which Sir Walter Raleigh had published in 1614.

If so—and I feel it difficult to question the reminiscence—then this has its interest as an almost solitary example in which the work of an English contemporary is found exercising an influence on the style of Donne.

One of the most remarkable of the *Holy Sonnets* is the ninth of 1633 (thirteenth in 1635). In it we have a memorable instance of the clairvoyance with which Donne, from the vantage-ground of his conversion, looked back upon his profane past. Donne's reference here to his old erotic poetry is, to my mind, a singularly characteristic one, and helps to explain why he preserved so carefully, to the very last, though he never would publish, the evidences of his early enslavement to the flesh. This sonnet is a dialogue with his soul, whom he bids—as the approach of nightfall suggests the thought, “What if the present were the world's last night?”—to turn through the gathering twilight and see whether it quails to watch, whitening on the wall, the picture of Christ crucified. Can that sweet face mean to doom the soul to hell?

“No! no! but as in my idolatry  
I said to all my profane mistresses,  
Beauty of pity, foulness only is  
A sign of rigour; so I say to thee,  
To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assign'd;  
This beauteous form assumes a piteous mind.”

In another mood he conceives himself a helpless, beleaguered city held by a hateful and tyrannic foe. The city, unarmed, cannot resist, cannot even make a sign, but with all its heart it yearns after its besieger; and so the soul, bound and betrothed to Satan, and occupied by his armed forces, dearly loves God, and would fain see His victorious army enter its gates and drive out the abhorred usurper.

The three sonnets which are now added to the series have a peculiar importance. It is evident that they were suppressed by the editors of 1633 and 1635 because of the leaning which they betrayed to certain Romish doctrines. In this they offer to us a remarkable contribution to our knowledge of the inner mind of Donne. They seem to prove that even after the death of his wife, and his subse-

quent conversion, he hankered after some tenets of the Roman faith, or at least that he still doubted as to his attitude with regard to them. In this it is probable that he found a sympathiser in secret in Lord Doncaster, and it is not unworthy of notice that, by a special direction, he bequeathed to that nobleman a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which, until the last days of his life, hung in his private dining-room in the Deanery of St. Paul's. In the early seventeenth century, in England, such pictures were appreciated for their subject more and for their artistic merit less than has since become the fashion. Donne would not have kept for ever before his eyes in privacy, and have passed on to Lord Doncaster (then Earl of Carlisle), as a peculiar treasure, a painting of the Virgin Mary, unless they had both preserved a tender interest in her cult, and were equally out of sympathy with the iconoclastic puritanism of the age in England.

It has been conjectured that to this point of Donne's life belongs the long exercise in couplets, a paraphrase of the five opening chapters of the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah. He was aided in its composition by the commentary of the German divine, Emanuel Tremellius (1510-1580).

In his transcendental ecstasy of new faith and sacrifice Donne might have slipped away wholly from worldly responsibilities; but he was held fast to earth by the seven-fold chain of his young family, so pathetically appealing to him for care and protection. He was now in comfortable conditions, and the love of "that noble Society" of the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn "was expressed to him many ways." They found a house for him within their own precincts, where "fair lodgings were set apart and newly furnished for him with all necessaries." It appears from the records of the Society that his stipend was £60 per annum, "with diet for himself at the Bench table and for one servant with the Benchers' clerks." His eldest daughter Constance, now in her sixteenth year, was doubtless a not inefficient housekeeper, and marshalled the troop of brothers and sisters like a mother. We have evidence of the peculiar tenderness with which Donne regarded this

his first-born child. Meanwhile his relations with the Benchers were the most affectionate and cordial that can be conceived. To what they had already done "other courtesies were also daily added; indeed, so many and so freely, as if they meant their gratitude should exceed his merits; and in this love-strife of desert and liberality they continued for the space of two years, he preaching faithfully and constantly to them, and they liberally requiting him." Whether he was at once admitted into the full privileges of a Bencher or no seems a little doubtful; the language used by the Society in accepting his resignation in 1622 is ambiguous; it might mean that the office of Bencher was then conferred upon him in consideration of his services, or else that he held it while he was Preacher. In any case, his relations with Lincoln's Inn were as gratifying as possible.

Of Donne's sermons preached at Lincoln's Inn we are not aware that we possess more than fourteen. They are sometimes shorter than his other discourses, and they seem, in their easy, graceful address, to be intended for an audience of cultivated men, who were also men of business.

We may gain a pleasant picture of Donne, from an entirely fresh point of view, by considering him as he stood in the pulpit of the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn. These were the lawyers who had known him from his very boyhood, to whom, in their own season of levity, he had been "Jack Donne," the Lord Keeper's fantastical and paradoxical secretary, the poet about whose escapades so many mysterious tales had floated about. As years passed on, they had seen him become more sober. They had watched the growth of his intellect, but without being able to perceive, perhaps, that his attitude towards spiritual things had grown much more edifying. It needed great courage for Donne to stand up and discourse of righteousness and judgment to come before men of the calibre of the Benchers, who knew the world so well, and knew the preacher too, and would not be deceived by any pretence or insincerity. Donne took this difficult charge with dignity, turning to his old com-

rades as a "converted" man, in the fulness of his new-born spiritual strength, conceding nothing to their purely intellectual pretensions, shrinking not a whit from their ready and outspoken criticism, but setting before them, with the studied grace of delivery which their mental rank demanded, the most solemn and searching truths of God. One is reminded of Antoine Arnauld, in the next generation, coming back to preach to the lawyers of the University of Paris, among whom his youth had been passed; but with this difference, that there is no evidence of Arnauld's having passed through those fires of experience in which the fierce and complex soul of Donne had been forced to purge away its impurities.

The Lincoln's Inn sermons do not offer us many personal touches which help us in forming a portrait of the preacher. An anthology of the elaborate illustrations fashionable at that time, and specially encouraged by Donne, might be culled from them, and this would be a prominent example:—

"When our Saviour forbids us to cast pearl before swine, we understand ordinarily, in that place, that by pearl are understood the Scriptures, and when we consider the natural generation and production of pearl, that they grow bigger and bigger by a continual succession and devolution of dew and other glutinous moisture that falls upon them, and there condenses and hardens, so that a pearl is but a body of many shells, many crusts, many films, many coats enwrapped upon one another, to this scripture which we have in hand doth that metaphor of pearl very properly appertain."

Once only was Donne persuaded to recount to the Benchers an anecdote of his visit to Aix-la-Chapelle, the ancient Aquisgranum, in 1612:—

"Lying at Aix, at Aquisgrane, a well-known town in Germany, and fixing there some time for the benefit of those baths, I found myself in a house which was divided into many families, and indeed so large as it might have been a little parish, or at least a great limb of a great one; but it was of no parish, for when I asked who lay over my

head, they told me a family of Anabaptists. And who over theirs? Another family of Anabaptists; and another family of Anabaptists over theirs, and the whole house was a nest of these boxes, several artificers, all Anabaptists. I asked in what room they met for the exercise of their religion; I was told they never met, for though they were all Anabaptists, yet for some collateral differences, they detested one another, and though many of them were near in blood and alliance to one another, yet the son would excommunicate the father in the room above him, and the nephew the uncle. As St. John is said to have quitted that bath into which Cerinthus the heretic came, so did I this house. I remember that Hezekiah in his sickness turned himself in his bed to pray to that wall that looked to Jerusalem, and that Daniel in Babylon, when he prayed in his chamber, opened those windows that looked towards Jerusalem; for in the first dedication of the temple at Jerusalem there is a promise annexed to the prayers made towards the temple, and I began to think how many roofs, how many floors of separation, were made between God and my prayers in that house. And such is this multiplicity of sins which we consider to be got over us as a roof, as an arch; many arches, many roofs; for though these habitual sins be so of kin, as that they grow from one another, and yet for all this kindred excommunicate one another (for covetousness will not be in the same room with prodigality), yet it is but going up another stair, and there is the other Anabaptist; it is but living a few years and then the prodigal becomes covetous. All the way they separate us from God as a roof, as an arch, and then an arch will bear any weight, an habitual sin, got over our head as an arch, will stand any sickness, any dishonour, any judgment of God, and never sink towards any humiliation."

In 1617 there was printed at Douai a fine edition of the Vulgate, in six folio volumes, with the commentary of the mediæval father Nicholas de Lyra, and the gloss of Walafridus Strabo. This handsome work seems to have supplied Donne with his references, and, to mark its intimate con-

nection with the Divinity Lectureship, Donne presented it to the Benchers when, on being made Dean of St. Paul's, he quitted their pulpit. This book is preserved as a treasure in the library of Lincoln's Inn, and on the fly-leaf of its first volume bears the following inscription in the hand-writing of the donor:—

“In Bibliotheca Hospitii Lincoln: London:  
Celeberrimi in Urbo, in Orbe,  
Juris Municipalis Professorum Collegii,  
Reponi voluit (petit potius)  
Hæc sex in universas scripturas volumina,  
Sacræ Theologiæ Professor  
Sereniss<sup>mo</sup> Munificentiss<sup>mo</sup>  
Regi Jacobo  
a sacris  
JOHANNES DONNE,

Qui huc, in prima juventute, ad perdiscondas leges, missus  
Ad alia, tam studia, quam negotia, et peregrinationes deflectens,  
Inter quæ tamon nunquam studia theologica intermisserat,  
Post multos annos, agente Spiritu St<sup>o</sup>, suadente Rege,  
Ad Ordines Sacros evectus,  
Munere suo frequenter et strenue hoc loco concionandi  
Per quinque annos functus,  
Novi Sacelli primis saxis sua manu positis  
Et ultimis fero paratis  
Ad Decanatum Ecclesiæ Cathedr: S. Pauli, London:  
A Rege (cui benedicat Dominus)  
Migrare jussus est  
A<sup>o</sup> L<sup>o</sup> Ætat. suæ, et sui Jesu  
CIO. IO. CXXI.

It is supposed that the first painted window on the south side of the chapel of Lincoln's Inn, which is inscribed, “Jo. Donne, Dec. Paul. F.F.,” was put up at his expense. But we have been led too far on in his history, and must return to the year 1617.

Donne made his first appearance as a preacher at Paul's Cross on the 24th of March 1617, about ten days after the King had started on a visit to Scotland, where he proposed to introduce certain ecclesiastical changes

of no popular kind. James I. started on the 15th of March, but he did not reach Edinburgh until the 16th of May, and, in the meanwhile, the English clergy had amply sounded the note which the King desired should be caught up by his "barbarous" kinsfolk in the North. Donne's sermon, on the very suggestive text, "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the King shall be his friend," was almost a political pronouncement, and it was listened to by the most prominent men who had been left behind in London, "by the Lords of the Council and other Honourable Persons," such as the Archbishop of Canterbury (Abbot), the Lord Keeper (Bacon), the Lord Privy Seal (Winwood), the Master of the Rolls (Sir Julius Cæsar), the Master of the Wardrobe (Hay), and "divers other great men." We are told that "Dr. Donne made them a dainty sermon on Proverbs xxii. 11, and was exceedingly liked generally, the rather that he did Queen Elizabeth right, and held himself close to the text without flattering the time too much."

This sermon contains a warm exhortation to reprove and rebuke those false puritans, Catharists and Cathari, who indulge in a kind of affectation of singularity. In this he has been thought to point, almost without disguise, at the Presbyterians, who were involved in the reforming anger of James I. precisely because they persisted in "quarrelling with men, with states, with churches, and attempting a purifying of sacraments and ceremonies, doctrine and discipline, according to their own fancy." But it is perhaps more likely that this sermon was connected with Laud's action against the Puritans, set on by the King. Laud had opened this campaign at Gloucester towards the close of 1616. The expression "quarrelling with states" seems to refer, therefore, to the anti-Spanish feeling of the English Puritans, and does not appear to be applicable to any movement then proceeding in Scotland. Donne soon slips away from what was demanded by the exigencies of the occasion to a singularly dignified and impassioned appeal for purity and cleanliness of heart, adorned with more than usual of his beauty of illustration. The length

of Jacobean discourses is constantly surprising us; but this famous first sermon at Paul's Cross is extremely long, even when judged by a contemporary standard. It will be found that to deliver it in an ordinary tone of voice will occupy not less than two hours and forty minutes. The "Lords of the Council and other Honourable Persons," who listened to it, must have possessed extraordinary powers of endurance, or must have indulged in slumber before it was closed. So unduly vast, indeed, is this celebrated sermon, that we are tempted to believe that Donne did not deliver it all, but selected portions of it for his audience, sending the entire MS. to the King for his approval. In spite of its timeliness, this sermon was not published during the lifetime of Donne.

The personal history of Donne is very dim to us during these early years of his popularity as a preacher. The composition of so many sermons, so learned in contents, so extended in form, must have absorbed his entire leisure; we possess very little of his private correspondence from this time. The following letter I am inclined to attribute to the year 1617, notwithstanding the style in which it appears in the *Letters* of 1651. It is there addressed to Sir Thomas Lucy, but the references to Polesworth show that it must have been written to Sir Henry Goodyer. "My service at Lincoln's Inn being ended for next term," shows that the letter is subsequent in date to 1616. The edition of 1651 dates it, however, "Drury House the 22nd of December 1607," which must be wholly wrong. My own belief is that John Donne, junior, misread "1617" for "1607," and knowing that his father resided at Drury House in the latter year, he added that address on his own authority. Lucy Goodyer, the daughter who is mentioned as having sent word of Sir Henry's health, was married, still very young, to Sir Francis Nethersole in 1619, and would have been an infant in 1607. We may then, I think, safely believe that this pleasant letter of delicate and sensitive friendship was written on the 22nd of December 1617.

[*To Sir HENRY GOODYER.<sup>1</sup>*]

“SIR,—Because in your last letter I have an invitation to come to you, though I never thought myself so fallen from my interest, which, by your favour, I prescribe in, in you, and therefore when in the spring I hoped to have strength enough to come into those parts, upon another occasion, I always resolved to put myself into your presence too, yet now I ask you more particularly how you dispose of yourself; for though I have heard that you purpose a journey to the Bath, and from thence hither, yet I can hope, that my service at Lincoln's Inn being ended for next term, I may have intermission enough to wait upon you at Polesworth, before the season call you to Bath.

“I was no easy apprehender of the fear of your departing from us; neither am I easy in the hope of seeing you entirely over-suddenly. God loves your soul, if He be loth to let it go inch-meal, and not by swallowings; and He loves it too, if He build it up again stone after stone; His will is not done except His way and His leisure be observed. In my particular, I am sorry if my ingenuity and candour in delivering myself in those points, of which you speak to me, have defaced those impressions which were in you before; if my freedom have occasioned your captivity, I am miserably sorry. I went unprofitably and improvidently to the utmost end of truth, because I would go as far as I could to meet peace, if my going so far in declaring myself brought you where you could not stop. But I was as confident in your strength as in mine own, so am I still in Him, who strengthens all our infirmities, and will, I doubt not, bring you and me together in all those particulars, so as we shall not part in this world nor the next.

“Sir, your own soul cannot be more zealous of your peace than I am; and God, who loves that zeal in me, will not suffer you to suspect it. I am surprised with a necessity of writing now in a minute; for I sent to Bedford House to inform myself of means to write, and your daughter sent me word of a present messenger, and there-

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

fore the rest of this I shall make up in my prayers to our blessed Saviour, for all happinesses to you.

“Your poor servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.”

[*December 22, 1617.*]

In 1618, a Jesuit of Arras, Angelinus Gazæus, published at Douai a tiny volume of Latin verse, *Pia Hilaria Variaque Carmina*, which fell into Donne's hands. Something in one of these little pieces, “*Vota amico facta*,” struck Donne so forcibly that he translated or paraphrased it thus—

“God grant thee thine own wish, and grant thee mine,  
 Thou who dost, best friend, in best things outshine ;  
 May thy soul, ever cheerful, ne'er know cares,  
 Nor thy life, ever lively, know grey hairs,  
 Nor thy hand, ever open, know base holds,  
 Nor thy purse, ever plump, know pleats, or folds,  
 Nor thy tongue, ever true, know a false thing,  
 Nor thy word, ever mild, know quarrelling,  
 Nor thy works, ever equal, know disguise,  
 Nor thy fame, ever pure, know contumelies,  
 Nor thy prayers know low objects, still divine ;  
 God grant thee thine own wish, and grant thee mine.”

Though these verses were founded on the expression of another man, they are eminently characteristic of Donne himself, and they are instinct with grace and sincerity.

In the eighteenth of his *Holy Sonnets* Donne had spoken of that Church of Christ which,

“robb'd and lorn,  
 Laments and mourns in Germany.”

He was now to have an opportunity of studying her features. In 1617 the attention of Europe had been riveted on the dangerous condition of Protestant Bohemia, where the Emperor Matthias, an elderly and childless man, was king, and where the Bohemian Estates had just accepted as their future monarch an intolerant Catholic, the Emperor's cousin, Ferdinand of Styria, a prince who was entirely in the hands of the Jesuits. Into the in-

cidents of the revolution which, in consequence, broke out in Bohemia in 1618, it is impossible for us to go here; enough to say that the sudden importance gained by the Elector Palatine, Frederick V., and the danger to religious liberty threatened in Bohemia itself, gave an extreme interest to the whole movement in English eyes. A sort of apprehension passed over Europe; the horrors of the Thirty Years' War were dimly felt approaching. Spain was almost certain to be drawn into the imbroglio, and if Spain, then probably England also. James I., though still personally inclined to Spain, was beginning to see that he would be obliged to favour the Bohemians in their struggle to maintain their religious independence, perhaps with an inadequate sense of the remoteness of the sphere of action in which he desired to make his influence felt.

He was encouraged, however, to estimate that influence highly, for all parties competed for his help. In January 1619 Baron Christopher Dohna arrived with confidential messages from the Elector Palatine, and especially to break to the King of England the news that the Bohemians had determined to reject the candidature of Ferdinand of Styria, and, on the death of Matthias, to elect the Palatine Frederick as their king. This news was very distasteful to James, who distrusted his son-in-law's judgment and ability, and fancied himself drawn by this relationship into very dangerous combinations. England was at that moment within an ace of war with Spain. By the close of the month the King had seen that it was all-important for him to know at first-hand what was going on in Bohemia. He determined to send Sir Henry Wotton from Venice to Prague, but presently cancelled the appointment in favour of Viscount Doncaster. As Mr. Samuel R. Gardiner, whose investigations into the whole question of the Bohemian Revolution have made him the first authority on the subject, has said:—

“The selection of the man who, as Lord Hay, had unwillingly broken off the French treaty, and whose sympathies as a Scotchman were all on the side of France, was

nevertheless spoken of as highly satisfactory by the agents of the Spanish Government. The explanation probably is that Doncaster, who was apt to echo the sentiments of those with whom he lived, had for the time taken his cue from James and Buckingham. It was his opinion, he said, that Gondomar had gained more for his master in England by his courtesy than the most famous captain could have gained by his sword."

The events attending Doncaster's mission are interesting to us here only in so far as they affected Donne. His health had become more and more unsatisfactory, and that settled melancholy, which filled the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn with anxiety, doubtless was perceived by the King himself. The suggestion does not seem to have come from Doncaster, but from his royal master, that Donne should accompany the Bohemian embassy as chaplain; it would be, however, warmly welcomed by Doncaster, whose affection for Donne and delight in his company and conversation were unfeigned. The appointment was soon generally known; on the 30th of March Dr. Joseph Hall writes to Dr. Samuel Ward at Dordrecht: "My Lord of Doncaster will shortly see you in his way to Germany, whither he goes ambassador; Dr. Dun goes his chaplain." It was not correct, however, to say that Donne travelled as Viscount Doncaster's chaplain; on the contrary, the King further graced the embassy, and added to it a special dignity, by directing his own chaplain to accompany it. The position seems from the first to have been a sinecure, and to have been intended to give Donne an opportunity of resting his overworked brain, of recovering nervous strength, and of relaxing the extreme tension of his spirits with the entertainment of travel without responsibility or expense. In this spirit Donne accepted the charge; he warned his friends that he might not write home much, and, in fact, two letters from abroad are all that we possess. He was to "assist" Doncaster with his "conversation and discourse," but nothing was said, and certainly nothing appears to have been done, in the direction of secretarial work.

Before leaving England Donne put his house in order.

It is evident that he was far from confident of bringing his weary bones back to his native country. The letters which he wrote to various friends on leaving them are touching in the extreme. He received his appointment in the beginning of March 1619. It may be well to say that Noel Caron, Seigneur of Schonewal, was the Dutch minister in England, and that Richard Martin had died on the 31st of October 1618, only one month after having been made Recorder of the City of London. It would appear from this letter that Sir Henry Goodyer had been asked to induce Donne to write an elegy on Martin, from whom the poet had received favours, more or less substantial, in the old Mitcham days. The present letter shows that Donne acknowledged the claim on his muse, but found it impossible to be inspired. He was, indeed, in an "infirm and valetudinary" state, and of this there were many "visible signs." He believed himself to be in a consumption, and his friends feared the same, "his troubled mind, with the help of his uninterrupted studies, hastening the decays of his weak body."

"*To Sir H[ENRY] GOODYER at Polesworth.*"<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—It is true that Mr. Gerrard told you, I had that commandment from the King signified to me by my Lord and am still under it, and we are within fourteen days of our time for going. I leave a scattered flock of wretched children, and I carry an infirm and valetudinary body, and I go into the mouth of such adversaries as I cannot blame for hating me, the Jesuits, and yet I go. Though this be no service to my Lord, yet I shall never come nearer doing him a service, nor do anything liker a service than this.

"Yesterday we had news by Sir Noel Caron from Paris, that the Duke of Savoy was elected King of Bohemia, which would cut off a great part of the occasion of our going; but it is not much credible in itself, nor at all believed here, because it is not signified from Savoy, nor Heidelberg. Since Mr. Gerrard continues your gazetteer,

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

I need tell you nothing of the Queen of France's estate. For your commandment in memory of Mr. Martin, I should not have sat so many processes, if I could incline my thoughts that way. It is not laziness, it is not gravity, nor coldness towards his memory or your service; for I have thought of it oftener and longer than I was wont to do in such things, and nothing is done. Your last packet, in which your daughter and I were joint-commissioners, was brought to me, because she was at Hampton with the Queen's body; but I sent her part to her, and my Lady Uvedale's to her, who presents her service to you by me now, and says she will write next week, and so will I too, by God's grace. You forget me absolutely and entirely whensoever you forget me to that noble Countess. God bless you in all, Amen.

“Your true servant in Jesus Christ,

“J. DONNE.

“9th March [1619].”

There is reason to suppose that Buckingham favoured Doncaster's appointment to an embassy which was highly attractive to the gorgeous and ostentatious taste of the latter. Through March the ambassador made his preparations, hoping to start before that month was over. The death of the Queen (March 2) was not important, but the grave illness of the King (at the end of the month James I. was thought to be dying) was a serious cause of delay. The ambassador's departure was postponed, moreover, by reports which reached England of the failing health of the Emperor Matthias, whose death would throw open the doors behind which the angry passions of Germany and Bohemia were growling. It was probably in April 1619 that Donne sent the following letter to the Countess of Montgomery.<sup>1</sup>

She belonged to the Herbert set of Donne's friends.

<sup>1</sup> This letter was printed, without a date, in the *Letters* of 1651. The late Mr. O'Flahertie met with the original, and the text as here given has many corrections supplied by his MS. copy. The sermon referred to was on St. Matthew xxi. 44, and was probably identical with the discourse printed, as preached on the 21st February 1623, in the folio of 1649.

She was Susan, daughter of Edward Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, and she had married, on the 4th of January 1605, Sir Philip Herbert, who had shortly afterwards been created Earl of Montgomery. She was the mother of seven sons and three daughters.

*“To the Right Honourable the Countess of MONTGOMERY.*

“MADAM,—Of my ability to do your Ladyship service, anything spoken may be an emblem good enough; for as a word vanisheth, so doth any power in me to serve you; things that are written are fitter testimonies, because they remain and are permanent: in writing this sermon, which your Ladyship was pleased to hear before, I confess I satisfy an ambition of mine own, but it is the ambition of obeying your commandment, not only an ambition of leaving my name in your memory or in your cabinet; and yet, since I am going out of the kingdom (and perchance out of the world), when God shall have given my soul a place in heaven, it shall the less diminish your Ladyship if my poor name be preserved about you. I know what dead carcasses things written are in respect of things spoken. But in things of this kind, that soul that inanimates them never departs<sup>1</sup> from them: The Spirit of God that dictates them in the speaker or writer, and is present in his tongue or hand, meets himself again (as we meet ourselves in a glass) in the eyes and ears and hearts of the hearers and readers; and that spirit, which is ever the same to an equal devotion, makes a writing and speaking equal means to edification. In one circumstance, my preaching and my writing this sermon is too equal: that that your Ladyship heard in a hoarse voice then, you read in a coarse hand now; but in thankfulness I shall lift up my hands as clean as my infirmities can keep them, and a voice as clear as His spirit shall be pleased to tune in my prayers for your Ladyship in all places of the world, which shall either sustain or bury—Your Ladyship’s humble servant in Christ Jesus, J. D.”

<sup>1</sup> These words exemplify the danger of trusting (as, unhappily, we too often are obliged to do) to the text of 1651; they are there printed *receives debts!*

With that highly characteristic desire to preserve all his finished writings, although he would not be persuaded to publish them, Donne circulated among his most intimate friends copies both of his *Poems* and of his still more confidential *Biathanatos*. It was at this time, I believe, that several copies of his works in verse, and particularly that which is known as the Westmoreland MS., were made. The last-mentioned was prepared for Rowland Woodward; the following letter speaks of one promised to Sir Robert Ker. The highly important expressions with regard to the treatise of Self-Homicide speak for themselves.

“To Sir ROBERT KER with my book ‘*Biathanatos*’ at my going into Germany.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I had need do somewhat towards you above my promises; how weak are my performances when even my promises are defective? I cannot promise, no, not in mine own hopes, equally to your merit towards me. But besides the poems, of which you took a promise, I send you another book to which there belongs this history. It was written by me many years since, and because it is upon a misinterpretable subject, I have always gone so near suppressing it, as that it is only not burnt; no hand hath passed upon it to copy it, nor many eyes to read it; only to some particular friends in both universities, then when I writ it, I did communicate it. And I remember I had this answer, that certainly there was a false thread in it, but not easily found. Keep it, I pray, with the same jealousy; let any that your discretion admits to the sight of it know the date of it, and that it is a book written by Jack Donne, and not by Dr. Donne. Reserve it for me if I live, and if I die I only forbid it the press and the fire; publish it not, but yet burn it not, and between those do what you will with it. Love me still thus far for your own sake, that when you withdraw your love from me you will find so many unworthinesses in me as you grow ashamed of having had so

<sup>1</sup> Letters of 1651.

long, and so much, such a thing as—Your poor servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.”

[April 1619.]

“To the Noblest Knight Sir EDWARD HERBERT.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I make account that this book hath enough performed that which it undertook, both by argument and example. It shall therefore the less need to be itself another example of the doctrine. It shall not therefore kill itself, that is, not bury itself, for, if it should do so, those reasons by which that act should be defended or excused were also lost with it. Since it is content to live it cannot choose a wholer air than your library, where authors of all complexions are preserved. If any of them grudge this book a room, and suspect it of new or dangerous doctrine, you who know us all can best moderate. To those reasons which I know your love to me will make in my favour and discharge, you may add this, that though this doctrine hath not been taught nor defended by writers, yet they, most of any sort of men in the world, have practised it.—Your very true and earnest friend and servant and lover,

“J. DONNE.”

[April 1619.]

The Emperor Matthias died on the 20th of March, and again the embassy to the German States was delayed. James I., ever doubtful of his proper policy, desired to see what effect this event would have in Bohemia. It was feared at Heidelberg that the King of England was losing interest in the whole affair, and Von Plessen, one of the Elector's councillors, was sent post-haste to London. The following letter, begun on the 1st of April and despatched on the 4th, reflects the uncertainty of the writer as to their date of departure. Whether it was, indeed, written to Sir Thomas Lucy I greatly doubt; the tone is more that of a letter to Sir Henry Goodyer. No verse-letter, which can

<sup>1</sup> Letters of 1651, but collated with the original MS. in the Bodleian.

be identified with that which is here announced, exists addressed to either friend; Donne was indeed abandoning poetry when he could speak of "descending to express himself in verse." The "noblest Countess" is probably Lady Bedford, and the passages refers to her ancient and intimate friendship with the charming Electress Elizabeth.

"*To Sir THOMAS LUCY.*<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—This 1st of April I received yours of 21st March, which, being two days after the ordinary Smithfield day, I could do no more but seal this letter to be sent to you next Tuesday, because I foresee that I shall not then be in town. Whatsoever I should write now of any passages of these days would lose the verdure before the letter came to you, only give me leave to tell you that I need none of those excuses, which you have made to yourself in my behalf, for my not writing. For your son-in-law came to me so near the time of his going away, as it had been impossible to have recovered him with a letter at so far a distance as he was lodged. And my Lord Hunt[ingdon]'s messenger received that answer, which, I hope, before this time, you know to be true, that I had sent the day before by the infallible carrier of Smithfield.

"The Emperor's death may somewhat shorten our way; for I discern now no reason of going to Vienna, but I believe it will extend our business, so that I promise myself no speedier return by that. If I write no letters into England out of these parts, I cannot be without your pardon if I write not to you; but if I write to any and leave you out, lay all the faults which you have ever pardoned in me to my charge again. I foresee some reasons which may make me forbear, but no slackness of mine own shall.

"Sir, if I have no more the commodity of writing to you here, in England (as we may be gone before next Tuesday), I tell you, in this departing from you, with the same truth, and earnestness as I would be believed to speak

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

in my last departing and transmigration from the whole world, that I leave not behind me a heart better affected to you, nor more devoted to your service, than I carry with me. Almighty God bless you with such a reparation in your health, such an establishment in your estate, such a comfort in your children, such a peace in your conscience, and such a true cheerfulness in your heart, as may be strong seals to you of His eternal gracious purpose upon you.

“This morning I spend in surveying and emptying my cabinet of letters, and, at the top of all, I light upon this letter lately received, which I was loth to bury. I choose to send it you, to mine own condemnation; because a man so busy as he is, descending to this expressing of himself in verse, I am inexcusable towards you for disobeying a commandment of yours of that kind; but I rely upon the general, that I am sure you are sure that I never refuse anything for laziness nor morosity, and therefore make some other excuse for me.

“You have been so long used to my hand, that I stand not to excuse the hasty raggedness of this letter. The very illness of the writing is a good argument that I forced a time, in the fulness of business, to kiss your hand and to present my thanks as for all your favours and benefits, so, principally, for keeping me alive in the memory of the noblest Countess, whose commandment, if it had been her Ladyship’s pleasure to have anything said or done in her service at Heidelberg, I should have been glad to have received. Sir, God bless you, and *spiritu principali confirmete*; <sup>1</sup> and

“Your very true and affectionate  
servant in Christ Jesus,  
“J. DONNE.

“4th April 1619.”

At length Sir Isaac Wake, who was to precede Doncaster, started on the 27th of April. The States General of Holland announced, through Sir Dudley Carleton, that preparations were made to receive the Viscount

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the Vulgate, Psalm 1. 14.

and his train with all proper dignity at The Hague. They got so far as Canterbury ; they got so far as Dover ; and still they were not permitted to leave. During this nervous period of anticipation, Donne indited a very fine "Hymn to Christ," which ranks among the most personal of his sacred poems :—

" In what torn ship soever I embark,  
 That ship shall be the emblem of Thy ark ;  
 What sea soever swallow me, that flood  
 Shall be to me an emblem of Thy blood ;  
 Though Thou with clouds of anger do disguise  
 Thy face, yet through that mask I know those eyes,  
 Which, tho' they turn away sometimes, yet never will despise.

I sacrifice this island unto Thee,  
 And all whom I love there, and who love me ;  
 When I have put our seas 'twixt them and me,  
 Put Thou Thy seas betwixt my sins and Thee.  
 As the tree's sap doth seek the root below  
 In winter, in my winter now I go  
 Where none but the Eternal Root of true love, I may know.

Nor Thou, nor Thy religion dost control  
 The amorousness of an harmonious soul ;  
 But Thou would have that love Thyself ; as Thou  
 Art jealous, Lord, so I am jealous now ;  
 Thou lov'st not, till from loving more Thou free  
 My soul ; whoever gives, takes liberty ;  
 Oh ! if Thou car'st not whom I love, alas ! Thou lov'st not me.

Seal then this bill of my divorce to all  
 On whom those fainter beams of love did fall ;  
 Marry those loves, which in youth scattered be  
 On fame, wit, hopes—false mistresses—to Thee.  
 Churches are best for prayer that have least light ;  
 To see God only, I go out of sight ;  
 And, to scape stormy days, I choose an everlasting night."

At last, on the 12th of May 1619, surely with a sigh of infinite relief, Doncaster started with a magnificent suite of attendants from Dover, and arrived next day at Calais. Here the Ambassador and his personal suite were received by the Governor with great respect, and were even admitted to view the Citadel, which it was unusual to permit strangers, of

whatever quality, to see. They stayed a few hours at Calais to rest, and then passed on to Gravelines, intending, by easy stages along the coast, to arrive at The Hague. At Antwerp, however, something occurred to change Doncaster's plans, and, with lavish excuses to Sir Dudley Carleton, and promises to pay their respects to the States on their return, they proceeded to Brussels.

At this point the real excitement of the journey began, and we cannot doubt that the experiences of the next eight months were of singular benefit to Donne's physical and mental health. We hear no more, for the time, of his premonitions of fast-approaching death, no more of his weariness and exhaustion of brain and hand. To a man of Donne's extremely neurotic temperament, undermined by actual disease, or tendency to disease, of the nature, apparently, of what we know as gastritis—with its collapses, agonies of pain, and consequent intense dejection, brought on by anxiety or worry more than by material causes—to such a man nothing could be more salutary than a journey conducted without haste, through towns of a romantic novelty, in conditions combining the maximum of luxury with the minimum of responsibility. Donne, there can be no doubt, enjoyed himself as he had ceased to suppose it possible that he could ever do again. His duties were to drive, often no doubt in close propinquity to his ever-delightful friend, the gorgeous Ambassador, through variegated crowds in a particularly easy coach; to discuss with his patron, over a glass of Rhine wine, the diplomacy of to-morrow; or to prepare, on very unusual occasions, one of his rich sermons before delivering it in a court chapel to a Queen of Hearts and her companions. It is needless to insist on the charm, to a man of Donne's learning and curiosity, in passing through the centre of Europe, so little known to Englishmen of that day, under auspices so safe and so favourable.

They arrived at Brussels on the 21st of May, and were solemnly met outside the gates of the city by the representatives of the Archduke, who sent from twenty-five to thirty state coaches to meet the English ambassador and

accompany him into Brussels. There was, however, an instant disappointment, for it was discovered that the Archduke was ill, and absent in his palace of Mariemont. The Embassy hung about in Brussels for several days, but on the 25th the Ambassador and his particular suite left for the little town of Binche, not far from the present frontier of France. Here the Duc d'Aumale and the courtiers of the Archduke met and conducted them to Mariemont, where the acuteness of Doncaster was unable to decide whether or no the Archduke was quite so ill as he represented himself to be. After an unsatisfactory visit the Embassy returned to Brussels, and left for Germany on the 1st of June.

On the 4th they reached Cologne (or Cullen, as English people then pronounced it), and a flotilla of boats started with them up the Rhine next day. The voyage closed at Frankfort on the 8th, but, as they must have been dragged by horses against the stream, no time had been lost. At Frankfort they received messages from Heidelberg, announcing that the Elector Palatine was at Heilbronn attending a congress of the Princes of the Union. Here Doncaster had no business, especially as Sir Henry Wotton had gone to Heilbronn precisely to represent the King of England; after due rest, therefore, the Ambassador pushed on for Heidelberg, where the Electress Elizabeth was awaiting them. At Bensheim, on the 10th, they met the coaches which she had sent to fetch them, while she despatched other messengers to hurry the Elector home from Heilbronn.

On the arrival of the Embassy at Heidelberg, an amiable and adroit discussion took place as to where they should lodge. The Electress desired them to take up their abode instantly in the Castle; Lord Doncaster replied that it was impossible to take advantage of the hospitality of an absent prince. She replied that it was her husband's wish and expectation that they should lodge at his cost from the first; Lord Doncaster, with profound gratitude and apology, yet sent to order lodgings in the town for his suite and himself. The Electress then took a step eminently charac-

teristic of her impetuous and merry temper. She issued a proclamation forbidding the markets of Heidelberg to supply any of the necessaries of life to any member of the English Embassy. Conquered by this violent hospitality, literally starved into submission, Doncaster and his suite took possession of the magnificent apartments which had been prepared for them in the Castle.

Next day (June 11, 1619) the Elector came back post-haste from Heilbronn. Nothing could exceed his cordiality. Doncaster wrote a week later to James I. an account which was all painted in the most glowing rose-colour. The English King was revered and "redoubted" by the Elector; while as for the Electress, the Ambassador could say "no more than that she is that same devout, good, sweet Princess your Majesty's daughter should be, and she ever was, obliging all hearts that come near her by her courtesy, and so dearly loving and beloved of the Prince her husband, that it is a joy to all that behold them."

Of the personal charm of this misguided and unlucky pair there was never any question; and Donne did not come under it now for the first time. He had composed for their wedding the most beautiful of all his epithalamia; he had known the Electress in her disciplined and careful childhood. One of her earliest demands now was that he should preach before her; and he delivered, in fact, two elaborate discourses, of which one, preached on the 16th of June, has been preserved. She was a great admirer of his delivery, and an enthusiastic listener. Long afterwards, as the luckless Queen of Bohemia, she referred to the delight, "and I hope some measure of edification," with which she had always listened to the messages of God from Dr. Donne.

From Heidelberg in June, Lord Doncaster wrote directly to James I., asking that Francis Nethersole might be sent out to be his secretary in the place of Sir Albert Morton. This was done; and in September Nethersole was knighted, and appointed to an honorary position at the court of the Electress Elizabeth. He had just married Lucy, the daughter of Sir Henry Goodyer, and was therefore commended to Donne in several capacities. His business was

to go to and from the Ambassador to London, The Hague, or wherever a trusty messenger was needed, and he was doubtless the channel through which Donne communicated with his family.

Policy obliged the Elector Palatine to return almost immediately to Heilbronn. Nor did the English Embassy enjoy more than about a fortnight of the Electress's hospitality. They were at Ulm on the 24th of June, at Augsburg on the 27th, at Munich on the 30th, engaged in a hunt after the evasive King Ferdinand of Bohemia. Here Donne seems to have met, for a brief space, his old friend Sir Henry Wotton. They all believed that Ferdinand was in Vienna; but he was really making for Salzburg, thence to issue proclamations to his Bohemian and Hungarian subjects, and to the Princes of Europe. The Embassy had actually arrived at Wasserburg, and was making arrangements to be taken in boats down the Inn and so down the Danube to Vienna, when a postillion told a farrier of Lord Doncaster's that Ferdinand would be in Salzburg on the 7th of July. Thus casually did high news of state travel in those romantic days. Turning up-stream instead of down, the English Embassy reached Salzburg on the 5th, and had two days for rest before witnessing the entry of King Ferdinand with a train of fifty persons.

With the nature of Doncaster's delicate and not very sagacious negotiations we have nothing to do. We are merely chronicling the movements of James I.'s chaplain. After the departure of Ferdinand there was nothing to keep the Embassy in Salzburg. It took them seven days, travelling twelve hours a day, through torrents of drenching rain, to reach Nuremberg. Being so near, they turned aside to Ansbach, and were the guests of the hereditary Marquis; thence to Heidelberg, and, on the 20th, on to Hanau, in Hesse-Cassel, where, close to Frankfort, but not in it, Doncaster could treat by correspondence with the powers there assembled. He was not allowed to enter Frankfort, because of Ferdinand's election, which came off on the 18th of August, and was a grave defeat for the Palatinate party. After three weeks of dangling in

Hanau, Doncaster conceived his further stay in the heart of Germany useless, and announced his intention of withdrawing to Spa. The Bohemians now elected the Palgrave as their King. Doncaster was highly incensed both with Ferdinand and the Spanish Ambassador, and sick of the way in which he had been twisted round their subtle fingers. He announced that he should remain at Spa, until he had time to receive from James I. an answer to his request to be allowed to come home to England.

He was not permitted to do so, however, and on the 31st of August Donne wrote, as follows, to Sir Dudley Carleton at The Hague, to announce that they were on their way to Holland:—

“*To Sir DUDLEY CARLETON.*<sup>1</sup>

“I present to your Lordship here a hand which I think you never saw, and a name which carries no such merit with it as that it should be well known to you; but yet it is the hand and the name of a person very much devoted to your Lordship’s service. If that be not enough to excuse my present importunity, this is abundantly enough, that herein I execute a commandment of my Lord of Doncaster’s, who, having formerly written to Calandrini to Nuremberg to change the place of the receipt of his moneys, and to send those bills which are to serve him at Amsterdam to your Lordship (which he doubteth not before this time is performed by Calandrini), hath commanded me now to accompany this servant of his, Mr. Whitlow, with this address to your Lordship, that he may receive such bills as Calandrini hath consigned to your hands for his use. He commanded me also to let your Lordship know, that the Count Palatine, after his having been elected King of Bohemia, despatched the Baron Donah into England, from whom in his passing by Cologne his Lordship received a letter, and with yet another from the Count Palatine himself, from the resultance of which, and of other advices, my Lord doth not think

<sup>1</sup> Holograph, State Papers, Holland. This letter was discovered by Mr. S. R. Gardiner, and printed for the Camden Society in 1868.

that he abuses himself in believing that the Count Palatine hath a disposition to accept of that crown.

“Before Baron Donah’s passing, my Lord (who understood otherwise of the election) had sent his secretary, Mr. Nethersole, into England to present more effectually than letters could do, and more clearly than yet was apprehended, the state of the affairs here, and now is come to Maestricht, where he proposes to attend his secretary’s return. And, howsoever his Majesty shall be pleased to dispose of him further in this negotiation, my Lord hath already conceived much comfort in this, that he hath already instruction, when he shall return, to return by Holland, when he may declare his affection to them [the States General?], and his desire to empty himself freely in all things conducing to his Majesty’s service in your Lordship’s bosom.

“It is such a general business that even so low and poor a man as I have a part in it, and an office to do for it, which is to promove it with the same prayers as I present for mine own soul to the ears of Almighty God. In which I shall never be defective, nor in anything wherein I might declare in particular my desire to be esteemed by your Lordship

“Your Lordship’s

“Most humble servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.

“Maestricht, 31 August 1619, *stylo vetere.*”

It is probable that Lord Doncaster felt obliged still further to apologise for Donne’s absence, since the following letter is found in the archives of the Society :—

“Viscount DONCASTER to the BENCHERS of  
LINCOLN’S INN.

“When I received his Majesty’s command for this negotiation in Germany, I received his command also to take Doctor Donne in my company. At that time I could not suspect that I should do an act so prejudicial to your service as to frustrate you of him so long a time. But since these businesses are not yet so composed as that his

Majesty may receive full satisfaction in my present return, the same command that drew Doctor Donne forth lies upon him still. Since therefore I am a continual witness of his desire to return to the service of your society, I thought it fittest for me to give you this signification of the reason of his absence, with an undoubted assurance that he shall suffer no prejudice in your good opinions thereby, because he is not altogether absent from that society now whilst he is with me, who, by your favour, have the honour of being a member of your society. Neither is he absent from the service of God's Church, and is in obedience to his Master's commandment. In my particular I shall receive it for a singular favour from you, that you would so long spare to me from yourselves a person so necessary to you and so agreeable to me. I hope to restore him to you by the midst of Michaelmas term, and for your favour to me and him shall ever apprehend any occasion to show myself.

“[September] 1619.”

The receipt of this application was thus entered in the books of Lincoln's Inn :—

“Council held on October 14th, 1619. Fifteen Benchers present.

“At this Council was presented and read a letter from the Lord Viscount Doncaster, tending to excuse the stay of Mr. Doctor Donne, who, by the King's direction or command, accompanied him to Germany for services not yet admitting return. With which letter the whole Bench stood well satisfied, the rather for that good hope was given that his place should be from time to time supplied till his return.”

Doncaster found, however, that to visit Holland at this time was impossible; he had to push back into Germany. He stayed at Maestricht until the 8th of September, when he was preparing to leave for Frankfurt. In writing to Sir George Calvert, he begged for still further increase of leave of absence for Donne :—

"I beseech you be pleased to do Dr. Donne this favour for my sake. At the beginning of the term he will be expected at Lincoln's Inn with some impatience, except you write a letter to the Masters of the Bench there, that his coming being by his Majesty's command, he cannot return till I do, which they may justly believe will be shortly. Mr. Brooke, a person (I think) known to you, will wait upon you for such a letter."

The object of the Embassy in Frankfurt was to congratulate the new Emperor, and, on leaving Maestricht, by the King's orders, they put off their mourning for the Queen's death. They were tugged in boats up the Rhine past Cologne, and at Frankfurt were lucky enough to catch the Emperor before his departure.

From Cologne Donne wrote as follows:—

*"To Sir TOBIE MATTHEW.*

*"COLLEYN [COLOGNE].*

"SIR,—At Ratisbon I had your letter from Brussels; and, in it, you. For, my former knowledge of your ingenuity, and mine own conscience of having demerited in nothing toward you, are assurances to me, that your professions are in earnest. I dare put myself upon the testimony of very many very good companies in England, where your person, and your history, have been the discourse, that I have never forsaken your honour and reputation. And you may be pleased to make this some argument of my disposition toward you, that when I have been told that you have not been so careful of me abroad, I have not been easy in believing it; and when at sometimes the authority of the reporter hath brought me to a half-belief of it, I have found other excuses in your behalf, than a mere disaffection to me; and now I am safely returned to my first station again, not to believe it. If it could be possible that any occasion of doing you a real service might be presented me, you should see, that that tree which was rooted in love, and always bore leaves, ready to shadow and defend from other's malice, would bear fruit also. You know, we say in

*✓ Sir Tobie Matthew Collection  
London 1660. 2: 336-7*

the schools that grace destroys not nature; we may say too, that forms of religion destroy not morality, nor civil offices. That which I add, I am far from applying to you, but it is true, that we are fallen into so slack and negligent times, that I have been sometimes glad to hear, that some of my friends have differed from me in religion. It is some degree of an union to be united in a serious meditation of God, and to make any religion the rule of our actions. Our sweet and blessed Saviour bring us by His way to His end! And be you pleased to be assured, that no man desires to renew, or continue, or increase a friendship with you more than, &c.

[signature lost.]

[September 13th (?) 1619.]

The Emperor presently left, and took all the coaches in the city with him, so that the English Embassy was bound to stay at Frankfurt, whether they pleased or no. Doncaster took occasion of the delay to pay a flying visit to Heidelberg, but Donne, on this solitary occasion, was not with him. Doncaster, who had been appointed in his absence Grand-Master of the Hunt, when, as he complained, all he could hunt was an emperor, was eager to return to England, but late in September orders came to him in Frankfurt to continue to pursue the Emperor Ferdinand, if need be, even to Vienna. All through October the Embassy were making their way through the heart of Germany, under great disadvantages, and this must have been the most disagreeable part of the whole expedition. They passed through Rothenburg and Nuremberg, and were announced as having arrived in Vienna by Zorzi Giustiniani in a despatch to the Doge of Venice on the 2nd of November.

Doncaster had never been to Venice, and had a great desire to see that city, in which we may believe that he was not discouraged by Donne. Accordingly, having left Vienna, and having at length caught their Emperor at Grätz, they started for Italy. Unluckily, it was too late in the year, the passes were closed, and they had to turn back to Salzburg. They got as far as Dogna, a little town a

few miles south of Pontebba, on the road to Venice; from Dogna Doncaster wrote on the 7th of November. They returned by the Tyrol, Nuremberg, Heidelberg, and Worms, at which last city they were expected on the 26th of November. They were at Arnhem on the 10th of December, where they had the pleasure of meeting Sir Francis Nethersole with letters and despatches. At last, after a weary perambulation, they arrived at The Hague about the 14th of December. After a cordial and gratifying reception from the States General, the Embassy found its way back to England in the first days of 1620.

The States General presented to Donne at The Hague a medal in gold representing the Synod of Dort, apparently as a compliment for his having preached before them, on the 19th of December, the very long sermon which he afterwards divided into two parts, in 1630, at Abrey Hatch, during his last illness. This gold medal Donne ultimately bequeathed to his young friend Henry King.

Donne returned from Germany, after his long holiday, "with his sorrows moderated and his health improved, and betook himself to his constant course of preaching" at Lincoln's Inn and at Whitehall. The following letter, which may belong to the year 1620, shows that Donne did not treat the incumbency of Keyston, in Huntingdonshire, which he held by the gift of the Benchers, entirely as a sinecure. Donne may, however, have gone to Keyston only to collect his tithes. Wrest was the residence of the Earl of Kent, with whom Donne was acquainted for the remainder of his life.

"*To Sir H[ENRY] GOODYER.*<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—Agreeably to my fortune and thoughts I was crawled this back way from Keyston; through my broken casement at Bedford I saw, for my best dish at dinner, your coach: I studied your guests, but when I knew where you were I went out of this town in a doubt whether I should turn in to Wrest; and you know the wisdom of the Parliament is to resolve ever in the negative. Therefore it is

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of 1651.*

likeliest I shall not come in there ; yet let me give you in passing thus much account of myself. I thought to kiss my Lady Spencer's hands at one house, and have passed three. If you know nothing to the contrary risen since I came from London, I am likely to have a room in my Lord of Don.<sup>1</sup>'s train into the country ; if I have, I do not ask but use the leave of waiting upon you at home. There and ever elsewhere, our blessed Saviour bless you and all yours, in which number, I pray, account ever—Your very thankful servant in Christ Jesus,

“ J. DONNE.”

The career of Donne during 1620 and the first half of 1621 seems to have been absolutely without incidents of a notable kind. He was selected to conduct the funeral in St. Paul's Cathedral of Dr. John King, Bishop of London, who died on the 30th of March 1621. This prelate had been an old friend ; he was chaplain to the Lord Keeper when Donne was secretary, and the latter speaks of King as “a companion to me in my first studies.” It is believed that King ordained Donne when he entered the Church ; both his own sons had taken orders, and both were now prebendaries of the Chapter of St. Paul's. Of these the younger, Henry, a man now of thirty years, was to become Bishop of Chichester, and to be distinguished as a poet.

Donne was dissatisfied with his position, and perhaps weary of the labours of his lectureship. A rumour reached him that Dr. John Bowle was about to resign the Deanery of Salisbury. There was to be a shuffling of places. The Dean of Westminster was John Williams, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, who was also Lord Keeper. It was supposed that if Williams was made a bishop Bowle would be translated to Westminster, and Donne hoped for Salisbury. This ingenious little arrangement, however, came to nothing, for Williams did not resign Westminster, and Bowle continued to hold the Deanery of Salisbury until he was made Bishop of Rochester in February 1630. The

<sup>1</sup> Printed “Dov.,” but Lord Dover is impossible, and the name was doubtless Doncaster.

following letter<sup>1</sup> refers to Donne's anxiety. It must be admitted that a certain want both of dignity and of candour (for Donne's fortune was, if moderate, no longer at all "penurious") is to be regretted in it. But a begging-letter of the beginning of the seventeenth century is not to be measured by modern standards:—

*"To the Right Honourable my singular good Lord the  
Marquess of BUCKINGHAM.*

" May it please your Lordship,—Ever since I had your Lordship's letter I have esteemed myself in possession of Salisbury, and more than Salisbury, of a place in your service; for I took Salisbury as a scale of it. I hear that my Lord Keeper finds reason to continue in Westminster, and I know that neither your Lordship nor he knows how narrow and penurious a fortune I wrestle with in this world. But I am so far from depending upon the assistance of any but your Lordship, as that I do not assist myself so far as with a wish that my Lord Keeper would have left a hole for so poor a worm as I am to have crept in at. All that I mean in using this boldness, of putting myself into your Lordship's presence by this rag of paper, is to tell your Lordship that I lie in a corner, as a clod of clay, attending what kind of vessel it shall please you to make of your Lordship's humblest and thankfullest and devotedest servant,

"J. DONNE.

" 8th August 1621."

The following very interesting letter, hitherto obscured by the carelessness of the editor of 1651, who misdated it 1611, would lend itself to much contemporary commentary had we the space here to devote to it. The "accident" of the Archbishop of Canterbury was his misfortune, while out hunting, to kill a keeper with a barbed arrow from a cross-bow. The man was out of sight among the brushwood, and had been warned that he was in danger, but none

<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Proceedings of the Camden Society* for 1871 (p. 157).

the less the incident placed the Primate in a terrible position. Abbot never recovered from the shock of it, although the King, who was not wanting in sympathy for sportsmen, roundly refused to listen to the Archbishop's enemies, and declared that "an angel might have miscarried in this sort." The scandal, however, grew and grew, the question having to be tried whether Abbot had not ceased to be capable of holding the see of Canterbury in consequence of his involuntary homicide. A commission was appointed to inquire into it, which, on the 10th of November 1621, reported to the King that there was no irregularity in the Archbishop's authority. Abbot, however, was a broken man, although he lived on until the 4th of August 1633, retaining the Primacy to the last. The references to the fall of Bacon add nothing to our knowledge of that famous event; they leave us still uncertain as to the amount of Donne's personal acquaintance with Bacon. They must often have met, but they seem to have had little in common. Lady Nethersole was Sir Henry Goodyer's daughter Lucy, whose marriage in 1619 we have already recorded.

The passage about his "circumference" gives us some indication of Donne's habits at this time. Peckham was still inhabited by a cluster of his old friends, among whom was the Master of the Rolls here mentioned, the excellent Sir Julius Cæsar. At Highgate lived Sir Henry Hobart, Lord Chief-Justice of Common Pleas; at Chelsea the Herberts; at Bedington, Donne's brother-in-law, Sir Nicholas Carew.

"*To the Honourable Knight Sir H[ENRY] GOODYER.*"<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—I have but one excuse for not sending you the sermon that you do me the honour to command, and I foresee that before I take my hand from this paper I shall lose the benefit of that excuse; it is that for more than twenty days I have been travailed with a pain in my right wrist so like the gout as makes me unable to write. The

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

writing of this letter will implore a commentary for that, that I cannot write legibly; for that I cannot write much this letter will testify against me. Sir, I beseech you, at first, tell your company that I decline not the service out of sullenness nor laziness, nor that any fortune damps me so much as that I am not sensible of the honour of their commanding it, but a mere experience whether I be able to write eight hours or no; but I will try next week, and either do it for their service, or sink in their service.

“This is Thursday, and upon Tuesday my Lady Bedford came to this town; this afternoon I presented my service to her by Mrs. Withrington, and so asked leave to have waited upon them at supper, but my messenger found them ready to go into their coach, so that a third letter which I received from Mrs. Dadley, referring me to Mrs. Withrington’s relation of all that State, I lose it till their return to this town.

“To clear you in that wherein I see by your letter that I had not well expressed myself in mine, Sir Ed. Herbert writ to Sir Ed. Sackville not to press the King to fix any certain time of sending him, till he was come over and had spoken with the King; Sir Ed. Sackville collects upon that that Sir Ed. Herbert means to go again; I think it is only that he would have his honour so saved, as not to seem to be recalled, by having a successor before he had emptied the place.

“We hear nothing from my Lord of Doncaster, nor have we any way to send to him. I have not seen my Lady Doncaster, for she crossed to Penhurst and from thence to Petworth; my Lady Isabella came to this town, where, before her coming, a letter attended her from my Lady of Titchfield; and thither she went with their servants, who stayed her coming. Hither came lately letters with good speed from Vienna, in which there is no mention of any such defeat as in rumour Count Mansfield hath been said to have given to the Duke of Bavyer [Bavaria], but their forces were then within such distance as may have procured something before this time. Those which watched advantages in the Court of the Emperor have made that use of

Count Mansfield's proceedings, as that my Lord Digby complains that thereby the forwardness in which his negotiation was is somewhat retarded. He proceeds from thence into Spain.

"The Duke of Bavyer hath presented the Emperor an account of £12,000,000 sterling in that war, to be reimbursed; and finding the Palatinate to be in treaty hath required a great part of Austria for his security, and they say it is so transacted, which is a good sign of a possibility in the restitution of the Palatinate. For anything I discern their fears are much greater from Hungary than from Bohemia, and the loss of cannon in a great proportion, and other things at the death of Bucquoy was much greater than they suffered to be published.

"We hear Spinola is passed over at Rheinsberg; if it be so they are no longer distracted whether he would bend upon Juliers or the Palatinate. I know not what you hear from your noble son-in-law, who sees those things clearly in himself and in a near distance, but I hear here that the King hath much lost the affection of the English in those parts. Whether it proceed from any sourness in him, or that they be otherwise taken off from applying themselves to him, I know not.

"My Lord of St. Albans hath found so much favour as that a pension of £2000 will be given him; he desires that he might have it for [ ] years, that so he might transfer it upon his creditors, or that in place of it he might have £8000, for he hath found a disposition in his creditors (to whom I hear he hath paid £3000 since by retiring) to accept £8000 for all his debts, which are three times as much.

"I have been sometimes with my Lord of Canterbury since his accident, to give you his own words. I see him retain his former cheerfulness here and at Croydon, but I do not hear from court that he hath any ground for such a confidence, but that his case may need favour and not have it. That place, and Bedington, and Chelsea, and Highgate, where that very good man my Lord Hobard is, and Hackney, with the Master of the Rolls, and my familiar Peckham, are my circumference.

“No place so eccentric to me as that I lie just at London, and with those fragmentary recreations I must make shift to recompense the missing of that contentment which your favour opens to me, and my desire provokes me to the kissing of your hands at Polesworth. My daughter Constance is at this time with me, for the emptiness of the town hath made me, who otherwise live upon the alms of others, a housekeeper for a month, and so she is my servant below stairs and my companion above; she was at the table with me when your letter was brought, and I pay her a piece of her petition in doing her this office, to present her service to my Lady Nethersole and her very good sister. But that she is gone to bed two hours before I writ this she should have signed, with such a hand as your daughter Mary did to me, that which I testify for her, that she is as affectionate a servant to them all as their goodness hath created anywhere. Sir, I shall recompense my tediousness in closing mine eyes with a prayer for yours, as for mine own happiness, for I am almost in bed; if it were my last bed, and I upon my last business there, I should not omit to join you with

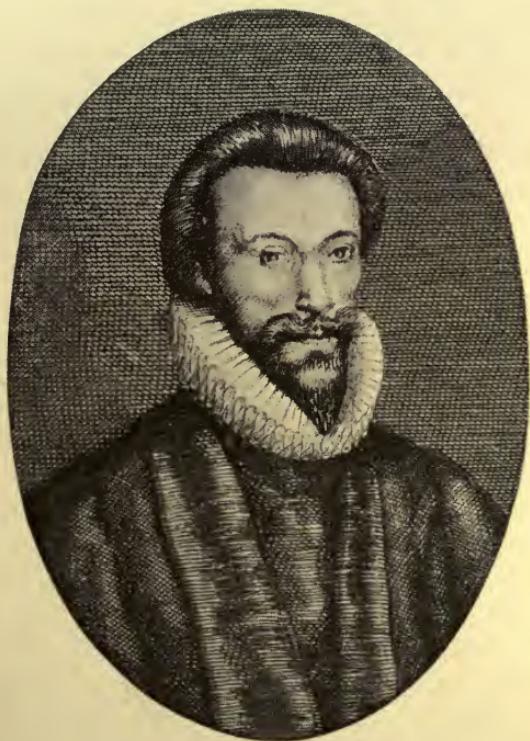
“Your very humble and very thankful  
servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.

“August 30, 1611[21].”

In 1621, upon the death of the Countess of Pembroke, the paraphrase of the Psalms, which she and her illustrious brother had made, fell in MS. into Donne's hands. He wrote a poem on the occasion, ending with these lines:—

“So though some have, some may some psalms translate,  
We thy Sidneian psalms shall celebrate,  
And, till we come th' extemporal song to sing—  
Learn'd the first hour that we see the King,  
Who hath translated these translators—may  
These their sweet learned labours all the way  
Be as our tuning, that when hence we part,  
We may fall in with them, and sing our part! ”



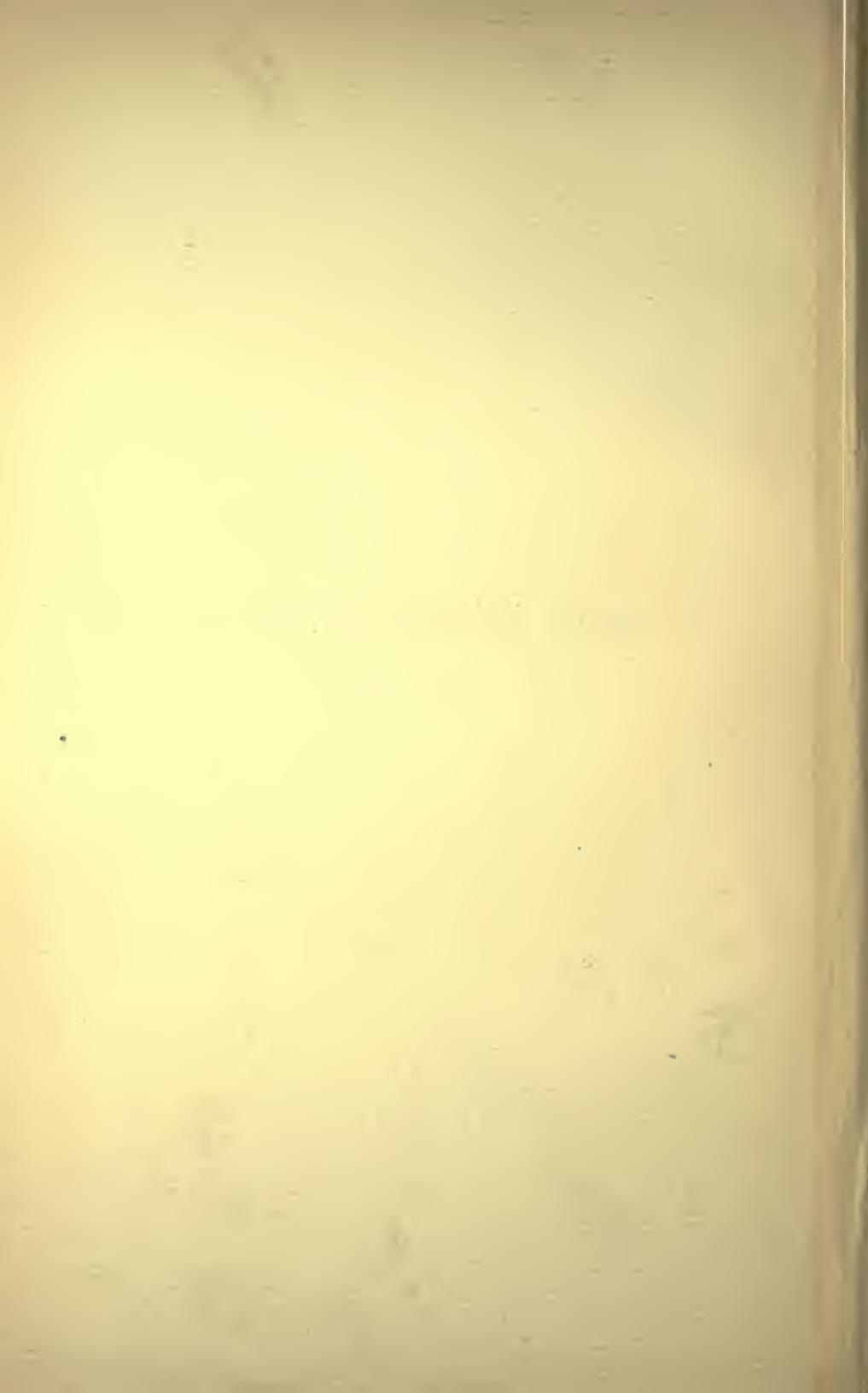
JOHN DONNE

*From an Engraving, published in 1640, by M. MERION, of  
an Original Portrait painted in 1615*



MADE DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

1621-1624



## CHAPTER XIII

### MADE DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

1621-1624

THE time had now come when Donne might reasonably expect promotion in the Church. He had been promised Salisbury, but there had been no vacancy there; he was now to receive a deanery much more suited to his tastes and habits. Three deans were raised to the episcopate in 1621, Williams being promoted from Westminster to Lincoln, Laud from Gloucester to St. David's, and Carey from St. Paul's to Exeter. Of these three deaneries it was obviously the last for which Donne was pre-eminently fitted. Cotton, Bishop of Exeter, died on the 26th of August, and a fortnight later Valentine Carey was nominated to succeed him. Carey was a man unknown as a writer and unvalued as a divine, but a person of undaunted "push"; he was elected to the see of Exeter on the 27th of September.

It would appear that Donne, in his anxiety to see the matter of the Deanery of St. Paul's settled, had turned to Villiers.

"*To the Marquis of BUCKINGHAM.*"<sup>1</sup>

"MY MOST HONoured LORD,—I most humbly beseech your Lordship to afford this rag of paper a room amongst your evidences. It is your evidence, not for a manor, but for a man. As I am a priest, it is my sacrifice of prayer to God for your Lordship; and as I am a priest made able to subsist, and appear in God's service, by your Lordship, it is a sacrifice of myself to you. I deliver this paper as my image; and I assist the power of any conjuror with

<sup>1</sup> From *Cabala*.

this imprecation upon myself, that as he shall tear this paper, this picture of mine, so I may be torn in my fortune and in my fame, if ever I have any corner in my heart dispossessed of a zeal to your Lordship's service. His Majesty hath given me a royal key into your chamber, leave to stand in your presence; and your Lordship hath already such a fortune, as that you shall not need to be afraid of a suitor when I appear there. So that, I protest to your Lordship I know not what I want, since I cannot suspect, nor fear myself, for ever doing, or leaving undone, anything by which I might forfeit that title of being always your Lordship's, &c.,

J. D.

*“September 13, 1621.”*

Donne was immediately assured of his succession in the picturesque way described by Walton:—

“The king sent to Dr. Donne, and appointed him to attend him at dinner the next day. When his Majesty was sat down, before he had eat any meat, he said, after his pleasant manner, ‘Dr. Donne, I have invited you to dinner, and, though you sit not down with me, yet I will carve to you of a dish which I know you love well; for, knowing you love London, I do therefore make you Dean of Paul’s; and when I have dined, then do you take your beloved dish home to your study, say grace there to yourself, and much good may it do you.’”

Donne could not, however, to continue King James’s “pleasant” humour, fall to at the beloved dish then and there. The case of Archbishop Abbot, threatened with deprivation for the involuntary homicide of a keeper in Lord Zouch’s park, was dragging on, and certain ecclesiastical acts had to be postponed till the status of the Primate was defined. Meanwhile Williams refused consecration from Abbot, and after some delay all the new bishops were consecrated by the Bishop of London as the Archbishop’s commissary. Abbot refrained from the performance of all metropolitical acts until after the Commission had decided upon his case. It is not accurate to say that the promo-

tion of Donne was directly affected by Abbot's case, since the Archbishop would have nothing to do with the installation of a Dean of St. Paul's, which was performed by the Bishop of London. But indirectly there was a connection, since Valentine Carey did not vacate the office of Dean until he was consecrated on November 18. The Deanery was in the King's gift, and would pass to Donne immediately that Carey became Bishop of Exeter.

The following letter, written probably to Sir Thomas Lucy, refers to several court appointments of the moment. Sir Richard Weston succeeded the poet Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, as Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lionel, Lord Cranfield, shortly to be made first Earl of Middlesex, was appointed Lord High Treasurer in September 1621. Lord Digby did not actually start for Spain till the spring of 1622. The Archbishop's Commission sat from the 3rd to the 27th of October; and their report being in the main favourable to him, the King was recommended to dispense with all irregularity. The ecclesiastical machine was set in order again, Williams being consecrated on the 11th of November and the other bishops on the 18th.

*“To Sir T. H. [? Sir T. Lucy].<sup>1</sup>*

“SIR,—This evening, which is 5th October, I find your letter of Michaelmas Day, and though I see by it that it is a return of a letter, not of the last week's, and thereupon make account that my last week's letter hath satisfied you in some things which this letter commands concerning Paul's, yet for other things I would give you a drowsy relation, for it is that time of night, though I called it evening. At the King's going from hence upon Monday last, we made account to have seen Sir John Sutlin Secretary and Sir Richard Weston Chancellor of the Exchequer, but they are not done, but both are fixed; my Lord Cranfield received his staff, with these two suits obtained from the King, that all assignations might be transferred into the Exchequer, and so no payments charged upon the

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of 1651.*

Customs, nor Receivers, nor the Court of Wards, &c. And that for a time there might be a damp cast upon pensions, till they might be considered.

“In the Low Countries the armies stir not. In the Palatinate Sir H. Vere attempting the regaining of Stenie Castle, was surprised with the enemy in so much strength, that they write it over for a masterpiece that he was able to make a retreat to Mannheim; so that now the enemy is got on that side the river which Heidelberg is on, and I know nothing that can stand in his way. My Lord Digby comes from Vienna, before he goes into Spain, by Count Mansfield, by the Palatinate, by Paris; and therefore upon his coming I shall be able to say something to you. In Sir John Sutclin I presume you see an end of Sir Robert Naunton, and we see an end of Mr. Thomas Murray too; I believe he comes no more to the Prince. For the trial of my Lord of Canterbury’s irregularity, there is a Commission to six bishops, London, Winchester, Rochester, and three only elect, Lincoln, St. David’s, and Exeter; two judges, Lord Hobard and Dodridge; two civilians, Sir H. Martin and D. Steward. The consecration of these elect bishops, and, consequently, my being Dean, must attend the issue of this Commission. Sir Thomas Roe is gone. The proclamations of putting off the Parliament till February are like to outrun this letter. It is very late; and it is one act to say grace after supper, and to commend myself into the hands of my blessed Saviour in my bed, and so close this letter, and mine eyes, with the same blessing upon all your family. Amen. Your poor servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.

“October 5 [1621].”

“*To the Worthy Knight Sir THOMAS LUCY.*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—Your letter comes to me at grace after supper; it is part of the prayer of that grace that God will bless you and all yours with His best blessings of both kind. I would write you news; but your love to me may make

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651.*

you apt to over-believe news for my sake. And truly all things that are upon the stage of the world now are full of such uncertainties, as may justly make any man loth to pass a conjecture upon them; not only because it is hard to see how they will end, but because it is misinterpretable and dangerous to conjecture otherwise than some men would have the event to be. That which is especially in my contemplation, which is the issue of my Lord of Canterbury's business (for thereupon depends the consecration of my predecessor, upon which the Deanery devolves to the King), is no farther proceeded in yet, than that some of the ten commissioners have met once; and upon Saturday next there will be a fuller meeting, and an entrance into the business, upon which much, very much in consequence, depends.

“Of my Lord of Doncaster we are only assured that he is in a good way of convalescence; but of any audience nothing yet. Slacken not your hold of my Lord Treasurer, for I have been told that you are in his care. I send you a copy of that sermon, but it is not my copy, which I thought my Lord of Southampton would have sent me back. This you must be pleased to let me have again, for I borrow it; for the other, I will pretermit no time to write it; though in good faith I have half forgot it. If in any letter I leave out the name of the Lady Huntingdon or Lady Burdell or your daughters, tell them that I named them. I take the falsehood upon me; for I intend it very really, and very humbly, where I am good for anything in any of their services. Our blessed Saviour continue and enlarge His blessings to you all. Amen.—Your humble servant in Christ Jesus,

J. DONNE.

“11th October 1621.

“Why do you say nothing of my ‘little book of Cases.’”

Of the “little book of *Cases*” of conscience nothing further is known. It has been conjectured that they were short exercises in casuistry, long since lost. I would rather

suggest that they may have been identical with the *Paradoxes and Problems*, which appeared posthumously in a small quarto in 1633. In neither case is it probable that they were or are of much importance, except as illustrating the restless ingenuity of Donne's mind.

“To Sir H[ENRY] G[ODDYER] at Polesworth.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—This 25th I have your letter of 21st, which I tell you so punctually, because by it, nor by any other, I do not discern that you received my packet of books; not that I looked for so quick a return of the sermon, nor of my Cases of Conscience, but that I forget so absolutely what I write, and am so sure that I write confidently to you, that it is some pain to remain in any jealousy that any letter is miscarried. That which I write to you of my Lord Treasurer's disposition to you I had from Mr. Harington, and I understood it to be his desire to convey it through me. The last account which we have of my Lord Doncaster is by letters of the 2nd of this; by which also we saw that the first letters of his convalescence were but prophetic, for he was let blood a second time, and is not strong enough yet to receive audience. Though I be not Dean of Paul's yet, my Lord of Warwick hath gone so low as to command of me the office of being master of my game in our wood about him in Essex. I pray be you content to be my officer too, the steward of my services to all to whom you know them to be due in your walk, and continue your own assurance that I am your affectionate servant in Christ Jesus,

J. DONNE.

“Oct. 25 [1621].”

The appointment of the new Dean was made in the following terms:<sup>2</sup>—

“JAMES REX.

“Right reverend father, right trusted and well-beloved and trusted and well-beloved, we greet you well. Whereas

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul's Library MSS.

our Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, London, is destitute of a principal minister by the promotion of Valentine Carey, Doctor of Divinity, late Dean there, which office and dignity appertaining to our disposition, we have appointed for the supply thereof, in consideration of his learning and other virtues enabling him to a place of sure dignity, John Donne, Doctor of Divinity and one of our Chaplains-in-Ordinary. Wherefore we require you the President and Chapter of that Church that, assembling yourselves, in due manner, you proceed forthwith to your election of the said Dean and to the same, to name, and admit him the said Doctor Donne. And that done, that you the Bishop and Chapter do perform and put in execution all other thing which appertain to you and every of you jointly and severally for the making up and perfecting of this our determination. Given under our signet at our Palace of Westminster the nineteenth day of November in the nineteenth year of our reign of England, France, and Ireland, and of Scotland the five and fiftieth."

The consecration of Valentine Carey having cleared the ground at last, Donne was elected Dean of St. Paul's on the 19th of November 1621. This was the crisis of his life and its principal material event. We learn from Walton that the new Dean's first solicitude was for the preservation of the ancient private chapel annexed to the Deanery. This he immediately employed workmen to repair and adorn, "suffering, as holy David once vowed, 'his eyes and temples to take no rest till he had first beautified the house of God.'" The Mansion House, as the Deanery was styled, was a large building fronting the north, with wings of irregular construction. It had spacious paved courtyards both before and behind, and the back court opened into Carter Lane; with a gate house and a porter's lodge at each entrance. At the east side there was a fine grass lawn running the breadth of the house. This "fair old mansion," one of the beautiful objects of that ancient London which the Fire destroyed, was valued at a rental of £150 a year, equivalent to at

least £1000 to-day. It stood in the parish of St. Gregory by Paul's.

Donne was now in affluent circumstances, and at Christmas 1621, when his father-in-law, Sir George More, whom extravagance and a vast family of children had greatly reduced in means, came to pay him his customary quarterly interest on his late wife's fortune, the Dean refused to receive it, and said, "It is enough. You have been kind to me and mine: I know your present condition is such as not to abound, and I hope mine is or will be such as not to need it; I will therefore receive no more from you upon that contract," and, to show his sincerity, he returned the bond to Sir George More. His generosity was the greater, inasmuch as he was now about to resign his appointment at Lincoln's Inn, and was threatened with the loss of his incumbency of Keyston. As far as the former is concerned, he parted from his old friends upon the most delightful terms. We have already spoken of his gift of a splendid copy of the Vulgate to the Library of Lincoln's Inn. When he ultimately resigned his Preachership, on the 11th of February 1622, the Benchers made the following entry:—

"Council held on February 11, 1622. Eighteen Benchers present.

"Mr. Doctor Donne being lately advanced by the King's Majesty to the Deanery of Paul's, by reason whereof he cannot conveniently supply the place of a public preacher of God's Word in this House, as formerly he have done, in signification of the continuance of his love to this Society hath now, at this council, presented to the Members of the Bench, as a free gift from him, six volumes of the Bible, with the comment of Lyra, etc., and the Glosse, etc., which volumes were accordingly received and delivered unto Mr. Foster, one of the members of the Bench and now member of the Library, there to be kept to the use of the House. And the Members of the Bench acknowledging, this and many others, the kind and loving respects of the said Mr.

Doctor Donne towards them, whereof they have had good experience, have now entered into consideration of some fitting retribution to express their thankful remembrance of him. And to the end it may appear that though they are glad of his preferment, yet being loath wholly to part with him, and that he may at his pleasure and convenient leisure repair to this House, being a worthy member thereof, and be no stranger here, have thought fit, and with one voice and assent have so ordered that the said Mr. Doctor Donne shall continue his chamber in this House which he now hath, as a Bencher of this House, with such privileges touching the same as the Members of the Bench now have and ought to have for their several and respective chambers in this House."

This has been interpreted as meaning that Donne was affirmed in the pecuniary advantages which the office of a Bencher conferred. I hardly think so; it seems to me merely to make the Dean of St. Paul's an honorary fellow of the College, as we might say, with privileges at bed and board if he should choose to avail himself of them, which, with a luxurious house of his own hard by, he would practically never do.

Mr. John Preston, of Queen's College, Cambridge, was, on the 21st of May, elected to succeed Donne as Preacher.

It appears from a document recently discovered that Donne was by no means willing to relinquish the incumbency of Keyston without a struggle. This, it will be remembered, was a cure in Huntingdonshire, which Donne held in gift from the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn, and it seems to have been regarded by some persons as forming part of the emoluments of his office as Preacher. At all events, when he resigned the preachership, a Mr. Silliard seems to have taken for granted that the rectorship was vacant, and to have approached the new Bishop of Lincoln, in whose diocese Keyston then was, with a request to be nominated as rector. Donne went to law upon the question, and the case was brought before Sir Henry Marten, the Judge of the Prerogative Court, who referred

it to the Lord Keeper. Silliard persisted in his claim, and Donne wrote the following letter:—

“ *To Sir HENRY MARTEN.* ”

“ SIR,—I waited upon you heretofore when a cause which concerned me was brought before you and others, in another way, as delegates. It is for a pretended resignation of the church of Keyston, upon which pretence one Mr. Silliard procured a superinstruction. To my Lord Keeper I have declared the direct truth of the whole proceedings for matter of fact; and, for matter of law, I have told him and them, that if any man learned in either law, of Mr. Silliard’s own counsel, would say that the church upon such a resignation was void, I would relinquish it. And now, I am informed that my Lord Keeper hath referred that point to you. If I had not come home from Bedfordshire late and weary I would have waited upon, but it had been only to salute, you, not much to solicit you (for that I know needs not) that you will be pleased to take that point into your good consideration; and so, Sir, I rest—Yours ever to be disposed,

“ *J. DONNE.* ”

“ At my house at St. Paul’s,  
May 9, 1622.”

Sir Henry Marten drew up a report,<sup>1</sup> on the 13th of May, dealing with the legal points of the case. This I have been unable to see, but it appears that the contest resulted in a drawn game. Donne was obliged to relinquish the living, but Silliard’s appointment was not confirmed, and Keyston remained without a rector from 1622 to 1643. Donne had no such trouble with his rectory of Sevenoaks, which he continued to hold until his death, but here there was a vicar, William Turner (1614–1644), both before and

<sup>1</sup> A rough draft of this report is in existence among the MSS. at Hinton Windrist Manor (see Hist. MSS. Comm. xiii., app. 4), and would be of great interest. I have, however, been unable to see it. On my asking Captain Loder-Symonds for permission to do so, my request was refused, on the ground that “ it would take a week to find ” the paper.

after Donne's sinecure but lucrative incumbency, so that, after the fashion of looking at such appointments in the seventeenth century, Donne was in nobody's way at Sevenoaks.

Donne had, however, for some years past received the promise of other pieces of preferment. One of these was an advowson in the gift of his friend, Charles Grey of Ruthyn, Earl of Kent, whose sister-in-law, Lady Elizabeth Grey of Ruthyn, was a patroness of Selden and a blue-stocking of her day. The appointment was to Blunham (or Blonham), a large parish with a very small population, in Bedfordshire; the hamlet stands on the river Ivel, about equidistant from Bedford and Biggleswade. There was a mansion at Blunham occupied by the old Lord Kent, and here, it would appear, Donne resided when he went down to take charge of the parish. Blunham does not appear to have been a sinecure in the sense that Sevenoaks and Keyston were. The following letter explains itself:—

“*To the best Knight Sir H[ENRY] G[OODYER].*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—At your convenience, I pray send my Lady Bedford this enclosed, but be pleased to put yourself to some inconvenience (if it be so) to kiss my Lady Ruthyn's hands in my name, and to present my very humble service to her, and tell her that no ill conscience of having deserved her, but only an obedience to her commandments, keeps me from saying to herself thus much, that this day I received a letter from my Lord of Kent, written yesterday at Wrest. In that his Lordship sends me word that that favour which he hath formerly done me, in giving me Blonham, is now likely to fall upon me because the incumbent is dangerously ill; and because this is the season in which he removes from Wrest thither, he desires (for I give you his own word) that he may be accommodated there (if it fall now) as heretofore. Out of my absolute and entire readiness to serve that family I sent back his messenger with this answer, that I esteemed it a great part of my good

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

fortune that I should become worthy to be commanded by him. If my Lady will be pleased to direct me in what particular manner I may best serve her purposes, I shall gladly wait upon her at any time, to receive her command with as much devotion and thankfulness as I received the benefit. I beseech you make her believe it, as in any place you believe—Your poor servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.

“26 February 1621[2].”

However harshly the name of the king's profuse ambassador may be treated by historians, the biographer of Donne carries away none but pleasant impressions of Lord Doncaster. His acts of friendship were unfailing, his courtesy and consideration beyond praise. It is evident that he surrounded Donne with little evidences of his affectionate good-nature. On the 22nd of April 1622 he was again appointed Ambassador-Extraordinary to France, and on the 19th of May he found time to send a tun of claret home to Donne from Bordeaux. “Love me still,” he said in a hasty note to his dear Dean, “and reserve this tun of excellent wine against your Michaelmas hospitality, where I mean to be.” He was back in time for that, and for his own reward, the Earldom of Carlisle; it was he who in September handed to the King the MS. of the Dean's sermon and transmitted James I.'s message that it was “a piece of such perfection, as could admit neither addition nor diminution. He longs to see it in print,” added the kind and serviceable ambassador. It was Lord Carlisle, too, who suggested the wisdom of dedicating the Sermon to my Lord of Buckingham, and Donne took his advice. It was several years past, and yet in 1622 Carlisle was still assuring his “dearest Dean” of the pleasure and profit which their long journey together had been to him. “I live upon the crumbs of my German devotions,” he wrote, “which, if I had carefully gathered up, had been an eternal feast.” In all his lifelong dealings with Donne, Lord Carlisle bears out Sir Anthony Weldon's description of him, “a most complete and well-accomplished gentleman, modest

and court-like, and of so fair a demeanour as made him be generally beloved."

When Donne was made Dean of St. Paul's it had been the custom for the afternoon Sunday sermons to be preached by selected preachers from outside. He altered this, and arranged that in term-time these sermons should be preached by himself or the residentiaries. The Chapter of St. Paul's consisted of thirty prebendaries, of whom the Dean was one, and the duties of these officials were definitely laid down by the cathedral statutes. Dr. Jessopp says:—

"The Psalter was divided up among the thirty prebendaries, each of whom was supposed to recite his five psalms daily, and to make them his special subject of meditation. . . . Donne's five psalms were the 62nd to the 66th inclusive. As prebendary he was required to preach upon the Monday in Whitsun week. As dean he preached on Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, and Whit Sunday. Every one of the Easter sermons have been preserved, and are to be found in the printed volumes; so are all those which he delivered on Whit Sunday. Twice, owing to severe illness, he was unable to preach on Christmas Day; but the eight Christmas sermons that he did deliver at St. Paul's are among the most carefully thought out and most eloquent of any that have survived.

"The same may be said of the five prebend sermons delivered on his allotted psalms. On the great festivals he did not spare himself; and on these important occasions, when large congregations came expecting much from the great preacher, he never sent them empty away."

To this it may be added that, while Donne's place in the Chapter was at its head, as Dean, he took his share in the work as prebendary of Chiswick. Perhaps this prebend was understood to go with the Deanery, for Cotton had held it before he was Dean, and kept it until his death, while Donne was apparently elected to it and to the Deanery simultaneously.

We possess about a dozen sermons preached during his first year as Dean. Of these the earliest is that delivered in his own cathedral on Christmas Day 1621. Dr. Jessopp

observes that this sermon "is unlike any of those which he had preached at Lincoln's Inn or at the court. It is marked by an almost entire absence of learned quotations or allusions. It is studiously direct, practical, and homely; and though the structure and *analysis* of the composition is as minute as he could not help making it, this sermon is marked by such simplicity of diction and illustration as makes it apparent that the preacher was thinking of his congregation and not of himself, seeking to reach their hearts and consciences, with never a thought of merely winning their admiration and applause."

Three of Donne's sermons of 1622 deserve particular attention. At the close of August he preached at Hanworth before the Marquess of Buckingham; Lord Doncaster had married Lucy, daughter of the eccentric and unfortunate ninth Earl of Northumberland, while her father was imprisoned in the Tower, and without his consent. The entertainment at Hanworth was prepared, partly to welcome Northumberland, now, after so many years, set at liberty, partly to obtain his belated approval of a marriage which he had been powerless to prevent. Donne preached a short sermon, not printed till after his death, and he contrived to ingratiate himself further with the now all-powerful Buckingham, to whom, at the advice of the King, he had in 1621 offered his services.

Three weeks later Donne was instructed to explain to the populace, in a sermon delivered at Paul's Cross on the 15th of September 1622, the purpose of the King's recent *Instructions to Preachers*, which had created so much excitement among the Puritan clergy. This was immediately published, by the King's desire, in a small quarto (1622), and is the earliest of Donne's printed sermons. Donne appears to have asked Lord Doncaster whether a dedication to the Marquess of Buckingham would be well received. He obtained the following affirmative answer—

"MY DEAREST DEAN,<sup>1</sup>—By his Majesty's commandment, I return your Sermon with his own word, 'That it

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

was a piece of such perfection as could admit neither addition nor diminution.' He longs to see it in print as concerning highly his service, and the sooner it be despatched it will be the only employment it needs. Your other business was moved by my noble Lord of Buckingham, in my hearing, which had a better answer than was desired or expected, whereof you shall have an account at our meeting. If you prefer an Epistle, in my opinion, it shall be fittest to my Lord of Buckingham. So I rest—  
Your faithful humble servant,

“DONCASTER.”

It was accordingly dedicated to George, Marquess of Buckingham, in which he informs the favourite that he, Buckingham, “loves the Church as her foster-brother, loved of him [the King] who loves her.” The text seems unluckily chosen to illustrate the supposed defiance of the King by the Puritans—“The stars in their courses fought against Sisera”—but Sisera was highly pleased with his Dean’s defence. There may have been a very large edition of this sermon printed; at all events the copies went off slowly. Besides this original issue of 1622, the sheets were bound up with later work in the *Four Sermons upon Special Occasions of 1625*, with the same dedication to the “Marquess,” although Buckingham had by that time been for two years Duke. In 1626 the identical sheets figured again in the *Five Sermons*, the dedication, however, being in those copies which I have seen, removed.

Among copies of his first published sermon which Donne distributed, one was sent to his old friend, the Electress, who, in the stress of her political troubles, may scarcely have had the heart to read it.

“*To the QUEEN OF BOHEMIA.*<sup>1</sup>

“May it please your Majesty,—That hand, which Almighty God sees at many midnights lifted up to Him in your Majesty’s behalf, your Majesty hath, before this time,

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

vouchsafed to see, in this manner, offered to your own eyes. I never come to this boldness, but when I have tried before how your royal father and royal brother have accepted these things which I adventure to present to your Majesty's hand. In this sermon I have more than the acceptation of my service in printing it, for I have a commandment from his Majesty to make it public. And, in all things that have any influence upon the public, the second thoughts of every man belongs to your Majesty; much more in me, who have tasted of your easiness, to pardon the rashness and boldness of your Majesty's most humble and devoted, &c."

[*October 1622.*]

On the 13th of November 1622 Donne was called upon to preach a sermon (upon Acts i. 8) before the Honourable Company of the Virginian Plantation. It has been said that Donne was himself one of the "adventurers" or shareholders in this enterprise, but I have not found his name, although those of many of his friends, in the list of adventurers printed in 1620. Perhaps he joined after becoming Dean of St. Paul's. The Virginia Company had now been running twelve years, and in 1622 a vigorous effort was being made to place it on a sounder financial basis; the King presided, Lord Southampton was elected treasurer, and Nicholas Ferrar, afterwards of Little Gidding, became deputy-treasurer. Donne was invited to preach a missionary sermon, and he pressed home, with not a little show of local colour, the necessity of recollecting that a duty lay upon the adventurers to convert the souls of the Virginian Indians:—

"O if you could once bring a catechism to be as good ware amongst them as a bugle, as a knife, as a hatchet; O if you would be as ready to hearken at the return of a ship how many Indians were converted to Christ Jesus, as what trees, or drugs, or dyes that ship brought, then you were in your right way, and not till then; liberty and abundance are characters of kingdoms, and a kingdom is excluded in

the text ; the Apostles were not to look for it in their employment, nor you in this plantation."

This sermon was immediately published, at the command of the Virginian Company, as a quarto pamphlet. It was reprinted in the *Four Sermons* of 1625. Donne did not relinquish his interest in the American colonies, and in July 1624 he contributed to Captain John Smith's *History of Virginia* a copy of commendatory verses, in which this cynical stanza occurs—

“ Nor wit, nor valour, nowadays pays scores  
 For estimation ; all now goes by wealth  
 Or friends ; tush ! thrust the beggar out of doors  
 That is not purse-lin'd ! Those which live by stealth  
 Shall have their haunts ; no matter what's the guest,  
 In many places monies will come best.”

In 1622 we meet with the earliest evidence that Donne was coming to be looked upon as a patron of poetry and a master in the art of verse. Early in that year a lawyer named Roger Tisdale published what he called a divine rhapsody, entitled *The Lawyer's Philosophy ; or, Law brought to Light*. This little volume, which is now excessively rare, is dedicated in a garrulous epistle to “the learned and Reverend John Donne.” From this preface we learn that Tisdale was an early friend of Donne (on whose name he bluntly makes the usual pun), and that he has long watched his career with interest. These sentences have a certain biographical value—

“ 'Tis you, dear Sir, that, after a soaring flight of many years, have now lighted upon a fair tree [the Deanery], under whose branches it is my fortune to hold a poor cottage. . . . The motion of your wings was to me a warning of your coming, and though it be in the wane-time of my life, I could not choose but open the doors of my heart to receive you. To your friends I was heretofore bound in duty, and (in our youthful society) to yourself in love. . . . I must ingeniously confess, as an ancient observant of your youth, that your young days were to me of as much admiration as those days are now of deserved

reverence. . . . In respect of my weakness, you may call it [the poem] an April daisy in the lap of winter, quickly blasted; but in respect of my aspiring love and your affecting goodness, I hope it shall be received and welcomed as a rose at Christmas."

The *Lawyer's Philosophy* is not an interesting poem, and Roger Tisdale, after publishing a *Pax Vobis* in Latin hexameters in 1623, judiciously subsided into silence.

A group of short letters to Sir Robert Ker belong to the summer of 1622. It is apparent that Ker has thought of employing in his service some one who had been in Lord Doncaster's train in the embassy to Germany two years before, and that he has asked Donne for a confidential report of this man's fitness, to which the Dean returns a very scrupulous reply, his hesitation being founded on the fact that Doncaster had not taken the same gentleman with him to Paris in April 1622. A few weeks after the third of these notes, on the 13th of September, Viscount Doncaster was promoted to be Earl of Carlisle, and the courtesy title of Lord Doncaster descended to his son, the second James Hay.

"*To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER.*<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—The same hour that I received the honour of your commandments, by your letter left at my poor house, I put myself upon the way hither; so that I am here in the habit of a traveller, and (suitable to the rest of my unworthinesses) unfit for great presences. Therefore, I abstain from waiting upon you presently; besides that in this abstinence (except I misinterpret the last words of your letter to my advantage) I obey your directions, in sending before I come to you. However, Sir, I am entirely at your disposing, if you will be pleased to add this favour to the rest, that I may understand wherein you will use your authority and power, which you have over your poor and humble servant,

"*JOHN DONNE.*"

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

*"To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER.<sup>1</sup>*

"SIR,—If I would calumniate, I could say no ill of that gentleman. I know not whether my Lord or myself took the first apprehension of it, but I remember that very soon we concurred in a good opinion of him; thereupon for justifying our own forwardness, we observed him more thoroughly, and found all the way good reason to ratify our first estimation of him. This gave my Lord occasion to send him abroad in his service after; how he satisfied him in that employment, indeed I know not. But, that I disguise nothing, I remember my Lord told me sometimes in his absence that he had not account from him of some things which he had deposed in him. And at his entering into his coach, at his last going, I asked my Lord, goes not the gentleman with you? and he told me with some coldness no. So that if you be not pressed to a resolution, you may be pleased to forbear a few days, till I may occasionally discern whether he have demerited or sunk in my Lord's opinion; and then you shall have another character of him from your very humble and thankful servant,

"J. DONNE.

"25th July [1622]."

*"To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER.<sup>2</sup>*

"SIR,—This is but a postscript to the last letter, and it is only to tell you that it was an impertinent jealousy that I conceived of that gentleman's absence from my Lord, for he gives that full testimony of him, that he never discerned any kind of unfitness in him for any employment, except too much goodness; and conscientiousness may sometimes make him somewhat less fit for some kinds of business than a man of a looser rein. And this is all that I conceive to have been in the commandment wherewith you honoured your very humble and thankful servant in Christ Jesus,

"JOHN DONNE.

"2nd August 1622."

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The facts reported concerning the German war give us the approximate date of the next letter. Frederick had had to flee from Bohemia after the battle of the White Mountain in November 1620. The war, then, proceeded in Germany, with results ever more and more disastrous for his cause, and at the close of 1622, Heidelberg, and Mannheim itself, having surrendered, the only town left to him was Frankenthal. Tilly defeated Baden at Wimpfen on the 6th of May, and Christian of Brunswick at Hoelst on the 20th of June, capturing the entire Palatinate in the summer and autumn of 1622.

Sir Henry Goodyer was deeply interested in all these particulars, as Nethersole, his daughter's husband, was in attendance on the unfortunate Elector Palatine. The celebrated John Selden is in this letter first mentioned as an acquaintance of the Dean of St. Paul's. He was by nearly ten years Donne's junior, but had early become eminent in legal literature, and had by this time published what remained his most celebrated books—his *Titles of Honour*, 1610, and his *History of Tithes*, 1618.

“To Sir H[ENRY] G[OODYER].<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I have the honour of your letter, which I am almost sorry to have received; some few days before the receipt thereof, Dr. Turner, who accompanied my Lord Carow to Sion to dinner, showed me a letter from you, from which I conceived good hopes that your businesses being devolved into the hands of the Treasurer, had been in much more forwardness than by your letter to me they appear to be. I beseech God establish them, and hasten them, and with them, or without them, as He sees most conducible to His purpose upon you, continue in you a relying upon Him, and a satisfaction in His ways. I know not whether any letter from your son, or any other report, may have given you any mention of me; he wrote to me from the Compter that he was under a trifling arrest, and that £3 and some little more would discharge him.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

I sent my man with that money, but bid him see it employed for his discharge; he found more actions and returned. Next day he wrote to me that £8 would discharge him, and that Mr. Selden would lay down half. But Mr. Selden and I speaking together thought it the fittest way to respite all till, in a few days, by his writing to you, we might be directed therein; and in the meantime took order with the keeper to accommodate him, and I bade my man Martin, as from himself, to serve his present want with some things. Since we told him that we would attend a return of his letter to you, I heard no more of him, but I hear he is out.

Whosoever serves you with relations from this town, I am sure prevents me of all I can say. The Palatinate is absolutely lost; for before this letter come to you, we make account that Heidelberg and Frankindale is lost and Mannheim distressed. Mansfield came to Breda and Gonzales to Brussels, with great losses on both sides, but equal. The Prince of Orange is but now come to Breda, and with him all that he is able to make, even out of the garrisons of their towns. The ways of victual to Spinola's army are almost all precluded by him, and he likely to put upon the raising of Spinola, between whom and the town there are hotter disputes than ever our times saw. The Secretary of the States here showed me a letter yesternight that the town spends 6000 pounds of powder a day, and hath spent since the siege 250 million pounds. Argit's regiment and my Lord Vaux are so diminished by comings away, as that both (I think) make not now in muster above 600.

Mr. Gage is returning to Rome, but of his negotiation I dare say nothing by a letter of adventure. The direction which his Majesty gave for preachers had scandalised many; therefore he descended to pursue them with certain reasons of his proceedings therein; and I had commandment to publish them in a sermon at the Cross, to as great a congregation as ever I saw together, where they received comfortable assurance of his Majesty's constancy in religion, and of his desire that all men should

be bred in the knowledge of such things as might preserve them from the superstition of Rome. I presume it is but a little while before we shall see you here, but that little time is likely to produce many things greatly considerable. Present, I pray, my thankful services to your good daughters. I can give them no better a room in my prayers and wishes than my poor Constance hath, and they have that; so have you, Sir, with your very true friend and servant in Christ Jesus,

J. DONNE."

[September 1622.]

"To Sir H[ENRY] G[ODDYER].<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—This is a second letter; the enclosed was written before. Now we are sure that Heidelberg is taken and entered with extreme cruelties. Almost all the defenders forsook their stations; only Sir Gerald Herbert maintained his nobly, to the repulsing of the enemy three times, but having ease in the other parts, 800 new fresh men were put upon his quarter, and after he had broke four pikes, and done very well, he was shot dead in the place. Mannheim was soon after besieged, and is still. Heidelberg was lost the 6th of this month. The King, upon news of this, sent to the Spanish Ambassador that the people were like to resent it, and therefore, if he doubted aught, he should have a guard; but I do not see that he seems to need it, in his own opinion, neither in truth does he; the people are flat; or trust in God and the King's ways. Sir Horatio Vere hath written to his wife (as I am told) a letter in the nature of a will, for the disposing of his estate and children, as though he did not account to see her any more, but yet Mannheim cannot be lost but by storming. Your man stays, and our bell rings me into the church; there, Sir, I shall recommend you to God's goodness with your friend,

J. DONNE.

"24th September [1622]."

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

"*To Sir H[ENRY] G[OODYER ?].*

"SIR,—All our moralities are but our outworks, our Christianity is our citadel; a man who considers duty but the dignity of his being a man is not easily beat from his outworks, but from his Christianity never; and, therefore, I dare trust you who contemplates them both. Every distemper of the body now is complicated with the spleen, and when we were young men we scarce ever heard of the spleen. In our declinations now every accident is accompanied with heavy clouds of melancholy, and in our youth we never admitted any. It is the spleen of the mind, and we are affected with vapours from thence; yet, truly, even this sadness that overtakes us, and this yielding to the sadness, is not so vehement a poison (though it be no physic neither) as those false ways in which we sought our comforts in our looser days. You are able to make rules to yourself, and our Blessed Saviour continue to you an ability to keep within those rules. And this particular occasion of your present sadness must be helped by the rule, for, for examples you will scarce find any, scarce any that is not encumbered and distressed in his fortunes. I had locked myself, sealed and secured myself against all possibilities of falling into new debts, and, in good faith, this year hath thrown me £400 lower than when I entered this house. I am a father as well as you, and of children (I humbly thank God) of as good dispositions; and in saying so, I make account that I have taken my comparison as high as I could go, for, in good faith, I believe yours to be so; but as those, my daughters (who are capable of such considerations), cannot but see my desire to accommodate them in this world, so I think they will not murmur if heaven must be their nunnery, and they associated to the blessed virgins there. I know they would be content to pass their lives in a prison rather than I should macerate myself for them, much more to suffer the mediocrity of my house and my means, though that cannot prefer them; yours are such too,

<sup>1</sup> This letter is addressed, in the *Letters* of 1651, to Sir Henry Wotton, an impossible attribution.

and it need not that patience, for your fortune doth not so far exercise their patience. But to leave all in God's hands, from whose hands nothing can be wrung by whining but by praying, nor by praying without the *Fiat voluntas tua*. Sir, you are used to my hand, and, I think, have leisure to spend some time in picking out sense in rags, else I had written less and in longer time. Here is room for an Amen; the prayer—so I am going to my bedside to make for all you and yours, with your true friend and servant in Christ Jesus,

J. DONNE.

“October the 4th 1622, almost at midnight.”

In this letter Goodyer seems once more to be in acute financial difficulties, and Donne excuses himself from giving him any practical help.

The Countess of Huntingdon mentioned in the following letter, which was evidently addressed to Sir Henry Goodyer, was Donne's old friend, who, as Lady Elizabeth Stanley, had married the young Lord Hastings in 1601, before he succeeded to the earldom. Why Sir Francis Nethersole, Goodyer's son-in-law, should be imprisoned for debt immediately on his return from his perilous continental mission, is perhaps not known. We are more interested in the discovery that the passage of years has brought Constance Donne to marriageable estate. She was, indeed, now nineteen; who the youth of quality was who fled both from a spiritual and a temporal wife we can never hope to know, for Goodyer evidently burned the “schedule,” as he was told to do. Constance was to wait a year before making a marriage, comfortable enough, one hopes, but certainly far less fashionable than this projected one.

“To the Honourable Knight Sir G. P.

[i.e. Sir HENRY GOODYER.]<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I would have intermitted this week without the writing if I had not found the name of my Lady Huntingdon in your letter. The devotion which I owe (and in

<sup>1</sup> From *Letters of 1651*.

good faith) pay in my best prayers for her good, in all kind awakens me to present my humble thanks for this, that her Ladyship retains my name in her memory; she never laid obligation upon any man readier to express his acknowledgment of them, to any servant of her servants; I am bound to say much of this for your indemnity, because though I had a little preparation to her knowledge in the house where I served at first, yet, I think, she took her characters of me from you. And, at what time soever she thought best of me in her life, I am better than that, for my goodness is my thankfulness, and I am every day fuller of that than before to her Ladyship. I say nothing to you of foreign names in this letter because your son, Sir Francis, is here. For that which you write concerning your son, I only gave my man Martin in charge to use his interest in the keeper that your son should fall under no wants there, which it seems your son discharged, for I hear not of them. For other trifles I bade my man let him have whatsoever he asked so as it might seem to come from him and not me; and, laying that look upon it, it came to almost nothing.

"Tell both your daughters a piece of a story of my Con., which may accustom them to endure disappointments in this world: An honourable person (whose name I give you in a schedule to burn, lest this letter should be mislaid) had an intention to give her one of his sons, and had told it me, and would have been content to accept what I, by my friends, could have begged for her; but he intended that son to my profession, and had provided him already £300 a year of his own gift in church livings, and hath estated £300 more of inheritance for their children; and now the youth (who yet knows nothing of his father's intention nor mine) flies from his resolutions for that calling, and importunes his father to let him travel. The girl knows not her loss, for I never told her of it; but, truly, it is a great disappointment to me. More than these, Sir, we must all suffer in our way to heaven, where, I hope, you and all yours shall meet your poor friend and affectionate servant,

J. DONNE.

"18th October 1622."

*“To my honoured friend Mr. GEORGE GERRARD,  
over against Salisbury House.<sup>1</sup>*

“SIR,—I do not make account that I am come to London when I get within the wall; that which makes it London is the meeting of friends. I cannot therefore otherwise bid myself welcome to London than by seeking of you, which both Sir H. Goodyer and I do, with so much diligence, as that this messenger comes two days before to entreat you from us both to reserve yourself upon Saturday, so that I may, at our coming to London that night, understand at my house where I may send you word of our supping place that night, and have the honour of your company. So you lay more obligations upon your poor unprofitable servant,

J. DONNE.”

[1622?]

The next letter is interesting and important, and has never, I believe, been printed until now. It is addressed to James I.’s Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte. Sir Thomas Roe had arrived at Constantinople late in December 1621, and he continued to protect English interests in Turkey until 1628. His personal prestige at the Porte was unprecedented, and he contrived to enforce a respect which had before his visit been systematically refused to European ambassadors. What Donne reveals in this letter of his own methods as a preacher is very interesting. He was evidently accustomed to preach without a written sermon, but from full notes, and if the King or any other person of importance asked to read what he had said, he was obliged to write it out from memory by the aid of the notes. It is therefore impossible for us to know whether any one of the mass of printed discourses which we possess represents with exactitude what was actually said to an audience. This may account for the extreme length of many of them; they may represent, in their present form, elaborate expansion at the study-table.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

*"To the Right Honourable Sir THOMAS ROE,<sup>1</sup>  
Ambassador for His Majesty of Great Britain to the  
Grand Seignior.*

" If your Lordship's chaplain be as well shipped as my letter is shipped in him, they come both well to your Lordship. Mine is but a vessel for another weather ; for now when I begin to write, I remember a commandment which my Lord of Carlisle laid upon me, to call for a letter from him, upon your first commodity of sending ; and before this letter be sealed, I hope he will return from Court. If he do not, I may have leave to say something, both of that which he would and that which he would not have said in his own letter. He would not have said that which I may, that he is the directest man that ever I knew, but he would have said that he is as much directed upon you as any, for, in good faith, he apprehends everywhere any occasion of testifying well of your Lordship. To speak in that language which you know to be mine, that is free in will (at least) from flattery, he provides for his ease and his thrift in doing so ; for, truly, I have met no case anywhere, where the delivering of a good opinion of you, or a judgment upon any of your actions, costs any man anything, or exercises him against an opposition. Our Blessed Saviour give you the comfort of it all your way, and your reward of it at last.

" Many grains make up the bread that feeds us, and many thorns make up the crown that must glorify us, and one of those thorns is, for the most part, the stinging calumny of others' tongues. This (for anything that concerned the public) you had not in your last employment, though then you had a domestic Satan, a viper, a tongue-stinger, in your own house. In this employment you have been every way delivered from it ; I never heard your private nor public actions calumniated, so you have the less thorns to make up that crown. But, Sir, since that crown is made of thorns, be not without them. When you contemplate Christ Jesus crowned with thorns, remember that those thorns which you see stand out hurt Him not ; those which

<sup>1</sup> State Papers Domestic, James I.

wounded Him were bent inward. Outward thorns of calumny and misinterpretation do us least harm; innocence despises them, or friends and just examiners of the case blunt or break them. Find thorns within; a wounding sense of sin bring you the thorns, and Christ will make it a crown; or do you make it a crown, when two ends meet and make a circle (consider yourself, from one mother to another, from the womb to the grave), and Christ will make it a crown of glory. Add not you to my thorns by giving any ill interpretations of my silence or slackness in writing; you, who have so long accustomed to assist me with your good opinion and testimonies and benefits, will not easily do that; but if you have at any time declined towards it, I beseech you let this have some weight towards re-rectifying you, that the assiduity of doing the Church of God that service which (in a poor measure) I am thought to be able to do, possesses me, and fills me.

“ You know, Sir, that the astronomers of the world are not so much exercised about all the constellations and their motions, formerly apprehended and believed, as when there arises a new and irregular meteor. Many of them this treaty of the marriage of the Prince hath produced in our firmament, in our divinity, and many men, measuring public actions with private affections, have been scandalised, and have admitted suspicions of a tepidness in very high places. Some Civil Acts, in favour of the Papists, have been with some precipitation over-dangerously misapplied too. It is true there is a major proposition, but the conclusion is too soon made, if there be not a minor too. I know to be sorry for some things that are done (it is sorry that our times are overtaken with a necessity to do them) proceeds of true zeal, but to conclude the worst upon the first degree of ill is a distilling with too hot a fire. One of these occurrences gave the occasion to this sermon, which by commandment I preached, and which I send your Lordship. Some weeks after that I preached another at the same place, upon the Gunpowder Day; therein I was left more to mine own liberty, and therefore I would I could also send your Lordship a copy of that, but that one, which

also by commandment I did write after the preaching, is as yet in his Majesty's hand, and I know not whether he will in it, as he did in the other, after his reading thereof, command it to be printed ; and whilst it is in that suspense, I know your Lordship would call it indiscretion to send out any copy thereof ; neither truly am I able to commit that fault, for I have no copy.

“ A few days after that I preached, by invitation of the Virginian Company, to an honourable auditory, and they recompensed me with a new commandment in their service to print that, and that, I hope, comes with this, for with papers of that kind I am the apter to charge your chaplain. In the exercise of my ministry I have assisted in the time of sickness, and now attended at the funerals, the first night of my Lady Jacob, and the next of Sir Wm. Killigrew, against whom the Bishop of Exeter, my predecessor here, had commenced a suit in Chancery of (as he laid it in his bill) £30,000 value. The case grew to a strange point. That which was laid to him was indirect dealing in the execution of a commission about the value of that land which was taken from the bishopric. His sickness made him unable to answer ; without it they could not proceed. There was proposed a way, to appoint him a guardian *ad hoc* ; but the defect being not in his understanding, some of the judges said, that if the case were treason, and he by the hand of God become unable to answer, he could not be proceeded against. Whilst they were in further deliberation the good man is dead, and the charge being personal, of which no other man can give an account, I hope the whole business is dead too ; though, if it be pursued, I do not discern that they are in any danger. I recommend myself to your Lordship's prayers, and I enwrap you with mine own soul in mine ; and our Blessed God enwrap in the righteousness of His Son both you and

“ Your Lordship's humblest and

thankfullest servant in Christ Jesus,

“ J. DONNE.

“ At my poor house at St. Paul's, London,  
1st December 1622.”

The next letter, also now printed for the first time,<sup>1</sup> must have been written while Buckingham was in Spain with the Prince of Wales on the business of the marriage with the Infanta. The two young men entered Madrid on the 7th of March 1623, and on the 18th of May Buckingham, who is here styled a Marquess, was created a Duke.

*“To the Most Honourable and my most honoured Lord, the Marquess of BUCKINGHAM.*

“**MOST HONOURED LORD**,—I can thus far make myself believe that I am where your Lordship is, in Spain, that, in my poor library, where indeed I am, I can turn mine eye towards no shelf, in any profession from the mistress of my youth, Poetry, to the wife of mine age, Divinity, but that I meet more authors of that nation than of any other. Their authors in Divinity, though they do not show us the best way to heaven, yet they think they do. And so, though they say not true, yet they do not lie, because they speak their conscience.

“And since in charity I believe so of them for their divinity, in civility I believe it too for civil matters that therein also they mean as they say, and by this time your Lordship knows what they say. I take therefore this boldness, and congratulate thus with your Lordship the great honour which you receive in being so great an instrument of that work in which the peace of Christendom so much consists. How to use a sword when it is out we know you know. Think you that commandment of our Saviour to be directed upon you: “Put up the sword, study the ways of peace!” The hardest authors in the world are kings. And your Lordship hath read over the hardest of them. Since you have passed from the text of the King of kings, the Book of God, by the commentary of the wisest King among men, the counsels of our Sovereign, the knowledge of other states and other kings, is down-hill and obvious to your Lordship, and you find it in posting. And for this blessed clearness in your Lordship, Almighty God receives

<sup>1</sup> From the Tanner MSS. in the Bodleian.

every day, not the prayers (their time is not when the thing is given already), but the thanks of your Lordship's humblest and devotedst and thankfulest servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.”

The preceding letter is remarkable for its statements with regard to Donne's Spanish studies. From poetry to divinity he had more books in that language than in any other. I have ventured to send a copy of this letter to my friend Mr. James Fitzmaurice-Kelly, the accomplished historian of Spanish literature, with a request that he would indicate to me what Donne's acquaintance with Spanish books might be. He is kind enough to reply:—“Surely Donne may have read everybody from Boscán and Garcilaso to the early Lope de Vega, whose *Dragontea* was published in 1598 and his *Rimas* in 1602. He may also have read the *Romancero General*, that great anthology of past and contemporary poets which was published in Madrid in 1600–05. He may even have known the early work of Góngora in Espinosa's *Flores de Poetas ilustres* (1605). In fact, with the exception of the drama, he may have possessed on his shelves nearly all that is best worth reading in Spanish verse.

“In prose, no doubt, he was familiar with the mystics. He must have read Luis de León, Santa Teresa, San Juan de la Cruz, Granada, Juan de los Ángeles, and the rest down to Malón de Chaide's *Conversión de la Magdalena*. Of course Donne cannot have known Luis de León's verse (unless he saw it in MS., which I think most unlikely); that was not published till 1631, the year of Donne's death, when Quevedo brought it out as an antidote to Gongorism.”

It is curious to see Donne turning resolutely away from the literature of his native country, which we know he contemned, while expending his full attention on that of Spain. He stands in a singular position therefore; he is an Englishman of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean age, wholly indifferent to Shakespeare, but eager

to read the elegies of Herrera, perfectly languid in the presence of Bacon, but an ardent admirer of Luis de Granada and Jorge de Montemôr. Yet we must remember that he went, in response to an imperious instinct, where his peculiarly southern and Catholic intellect found the food that it required.

*“To GEORGE ABBOT, Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>1</sup>*

“May it please your Grace,—Upon the 28th of this month I received this packet thus directed to your Grace by one of those merchants that trade at Frankfurt. By that letter, by which they were accompanied and recommended to me by the author, I find them to have been consigned into that merchant’s hands September 21. But the books are now brought hither by so great a circuit as, coming with them, I imagine, this packet to your Grace has suffered no other diversion than the rest. If the author be formerly known to your Grace it may ill become me to add anything. If he be not, your Grace may be pleased to receive this testimony of him from me, that in those parts where I have had some conversation with him he hath the approbation of a learned and painful man in his ministry, and is otherwise in the affairs of the world an intelligent person. Sometimes I receive letters from him and return some. And if your Grace be pleased to use my service, by which anything may be said to use him hereafter, I most humbly offer to your Grace in this and all wherein your Grace shall be pleased to command it, the service of

“Your Grace’s humblest and thankfulest servant,  
“J. DONNE.”

The Archbishop’s brief acknowledgment begins, “Good Mr. Dean,” and was therefore written after November 1621. I perceive no other indication of date, and have therefore tentatively introduced the letter here. I have come across no other examples of Donne’s correspondence with Abbot;

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

the tone of these notes is studiously courteous, but no more, and I believe that the writers had little sympathy with one another.

Various points indicate the approximate date of the next letter. The Earl of Carlisle had returned from his embassy to France; Olivarez's change of policy about the Spanish marriage was not yet known in England; Mansfeld's move on Bavaria was reported in London. These facts narrow us down to the early part of July 1623, and the letter is of some biographical value because we see from the tenor of it that Donne's dangerous illness had not yet developed.

“*To Sir H[ENRY] G[OODYER.]*”<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—You husband my time thriftily, when you command me to write by such a messenger, as can tell you more than I can write, for so he doth not only carry the letter, but is the letter. But that the naming of some things may give you occasion to ask him further, and him to open himself unto you, give me leave to tell you that the now Spanish Ambassador proceeds in the old pace, the King hath departed from his ordinary way so far as to appoint nine of the council to treat with him; but when they came to any approaches he answered that he brought only commission to propose certain things, which he was ready to do, but he had no instructions to treat, but expected them upon another return from his master. So that there is no treaty for the marriage begun yet; for I know you have heard Olivarez his free acknowledgment, that till the Prince came there was no thought of it. The King in his jests of this progress hath determined it, not as heretofore, at Windsor, but at Farnham during pleasure. So he is within a journey of Southampton, and even that circumstance adds to some other reasons, that he expects the Prince this summer, and that Sir W. Crofts, in his last despatches, enlarged the Prince in his liberty from his father, to come away if he would.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

“Amongst all the irregularities of this age, to me this is as strange as any, that this year there is no peace, and yet no sword drawn in the world, and it is a lost conjecture to think which way any of the armies will bend. Here it is imagined that Yukendorf and Gabor (for, for any concurrence of love, it is but a dream) may so far distress Bohemia as that Tilly must be recalled thither, and that if he be, Brunswick’s way is open into Bavaria, where he may recompense great losses, whilst Mansfeld and Gonzales, and his Excellency and Spinola keep the balance even in their parts by looking upon another.

“This noble friend of yours is in his last minute in this town, and I am going into the coach with my Lord to Hanworth. If I might have forborn the sealing the rest till my return from thence, you might have heard something more from

“Your very true, poor friend and humble  
“servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.

“No straitness makes me forget my service to your daughters. If my bell were tolling I should pray for them, and though my letter be sealing I leave not out my wishes, that their fortunes may second their goodness. Amen.”

As Donne advanced in his clerical career, his humility grew greater, and that horror of sin, for its own sake and not for its consequences, which marks the soul in its tender regeneration, became more and more obvious in his utterances. Many instances of this might be adduced from his published writings, but I prefer to give here an ejaculation which I believe to have not been printed before. It is taken<sup>1</sup> from a group of sermons, several others of which were edited in the folio of 1649, preached at Lincoln’s Inn, on the Thirty-Eighth Psalm:—

“My sinful desires are not hid from Thee, though I have laboured sometimes to cover them; and my sorrowful repentance is not hid from Thee, though mine unworthiness

<sup>1</sup> MS. in the possession of Prof. Edward Dowden.

and the abominations of my foulness might have drawn a curtain, yea, built a wall of separation between Thee and me, yet nothing is hid from Thee, nay, nothing is hid by me, for all this that I have done, all the sins that I have committed and all this repentance that I have begun and proceeded in is *ante te, Domine*, it is *ante te*, and my confession belongs only to Thee, but yet *ad te, Dominum*, to Thee as Thou art Lord, and hast a dominion, and exercisest a judgment, to Thee that art Lord of a spiritual kingdom, and of the visible and established Church."

We hear of two special sermons preached by Donne in 1623, the one on the 25th of April, when the new chapel of Lincoln's Inn was consecrated, and the other on the 23rd of October, when the Serjeants' Feast was held in the Temple, on occasion of fifteen serjeants being admitted to the degree of the Coif. The latter sermon was delivered at St. Paul's in the evening. It came at the end of a very fatiguing day, and it is probable that the Dean caught a chill; the whole procession walked through torrents of rain from Lincoln's Inn to St. Paul's; they went, we are told, "dabbling on foot and bareheaded." For nearly four years Donne had been living on the store of strength he had laid up in his long and easy holiday in Germany. We have no distinct knowledge of what his chronic disease was, but it was attended with violent internal pain, its crises were apt to be brought on by anxiety or excess of intellectual work, as well as by cold, and it was supposed to be "a consumption." It debilitated him extremely; he became emaciated under its attacks. It was aggravated by his neurotic temperament, which led him, as we have so frequently had occasion to observe, to dwell upon every distressing symptom. We are tempted to suppose that Donne had suffered from what we now call typhoid fever in his youth, and that it had left behind it a chronic tendency to gastritis. Whatever medical name we call it by, it was evidently a burning away of the internal organs, which gradually consumed, and at last destroyed him.

At the close of October 1623 he had one of his most dangerous attacks. For some weeks his life was despaired

of. The King sent his own physician to the Deanery to a consultation. One symptom of the disease from which Donne seems to have been suffering is a morbid cerebral activity; the patient cannot rest, cannot "think of nothing," but is acutely conscious of his condition and anxious to be talking or writing. This diseased vivacity can now be dealt with by medicine; the use of morphia was unknown in the early seventeenth century, and Donne sat up in bed feverishly scribbling his reflections. Some of them are very curious.

He begins by noticing the interesting fact that we are usually unconscious of the approach, or rather of the arrival, of disease:—

"This minute I was well, and am ill this minute. I am surprised with a sudden change, and alteration to worse, and can impute it to no cause, nor call it by any name. We study health, and we deliberate upon our meat and drink and air and exercise; and we hew and we polish every stone that goes to the building; and so our health is a long and a regular work. But, in a minute, a cannon batters all, overthrows all, demolishes all. A sickness un-prevented for all our diligence, unsuspected for all our curiosity, nay, undeserved, if we consider only *disorder*, summons us, seizes us, possesses us, destroys us in an instant."

He then, with a painful ingenuity, takes his body to be a microcosm, and dilates on the phenomena of thunders, earthquakes, eclipses, blazing stars, and rivers of blood, quite in the manner of Phineas Fletcher's physiological poem, *The Purple Island*, which Donne, whom it might have interested, can scarcely have read, for it remained, like his own lyrics, in MS. He confesses his tendency to make his illness irremediable by "sad apprehensions" and fretting over symptoms. In his next "meditation" the disease has pursued its course. He feels that his fever "doth not melt him like snow, but pours him out like lead, like iron, like brass melted in a furnace. It doth not only melt him, but calcines him, reducing him to atoms and to ashes, not to water, but to lime. And how

quickly!" He describes, looking back, how abrupt the attack was:—

"In the same instant that I felt the first attempt of the disease, I felt the victory; in the twinkling of an eye, I could scarce see; instantly the taste was insipid and fatuous; instantly the appetite was dull and desireless; instantly the knees were sinking and strengthless; and in an instant, sleep, which is the picture, the copy of death, was taken away that the original, Death itself, might succeed."

It must have resembled a bad sudden attack of what to-day we call influenza. He now notes that, although all his physical senses are disturbed and dulled, his spiritual senses are sharpened, and he is conscious of an unusual exaltation of soul. In his quaint way, he explains it. "My taste is not gone away, but gone up to sit at David's table; my stomach is not gone, but gone upwards toward the Supper of the Lamb." His being obliged to keep his bed excites him to a chain of fancies. With his morbid clairvoyance, he notices the expression of those who wait upon him in bed, "where I am mine own ghost, and rather affright my beholders than instruct them. They conceive the worst of me now, and yet fear worse; they give me for dead now, and yet wonder how I do, when they wake at midnight, and ask how I do to-morrow. Miserable and inhuman posture, where I must practise my lying in the grave by lying still." He has pages upon pages of ingenious sentiments about his bed, and we can imagine him lying there, all alone, propped up in state in his great dark chamber; scribbling these funereal conceits on a tablet that rests against the fold of the coverlet, while "that striking clock which I ordinarily wear" ticks on the table at his side.

It appears that it was incorrectly supposed by many that his illness was an infectious one, and he complains, as time goes on, of solitude; his friends regard him as "a pestiduct," and are afraid to come near him. They might wait, he says, till he is dead, and his body might really infect. They have a remedy for that, he jeers—they can bury him. He complains—he so social, so friendly—of being

left in his bed to suffer "an outlawry, an excommunication," to be separated "from all offices, not only of civility, but of working charity." We feel that he has passed the worst, that this is the irritability of approaching convalescence. He tries to console himself by recollecting that this "solitariness and dereliction and abandoning of others" disposes him best for communion with God. But he is manifestly very cross.

His powers of analysis are now concentrated on the doctor :—

"I observe the physician with the same diligence as he the disease ; I see he fears, and I fear with him ; I overtake him, I overrun him in his fear, because he makes his pace slow ; I fear the more, because he disguises his fear, and I see it with the more sharpness because he would not have me see it. . . . I fear not the hastening of my death, and yet I do fear the increase of the disease."

The doctor expresses a wish to consult with another practitioner, and the Dean's alarm grows apace :—

"If the physician desires help, the burden grows great. There is a growth of the disease then ? But there must be an autumn too. Whether an autumn of the disease or of me, it is not my part to choose. However, his desiring of others argues his candour and his ingenuity. If the danger be great, he justifies his proceedings, and he disguises nothing who calls in witnesses. And if the danger be not great, he is not ambitious who is so ready to divide the thanks with others."

The King's physician comes, and Donne seems to hear a poor account of his Majesty's health, for he reflects on the wretched fate of monarchs to be constantly reminded of illness by the faces of their court doctors. "They are gods, but sick gods," a Jupiter that needs an *Æsculapius*, a deity that has to submit to rhubarb and agaric. If he himself ever recovers, he will value health ; he will remind himself of his well-being with cheerfulness and joy ; he will try to forget that such a thing as illness exists. He is sorry for kings who have to keep a physician always in attendance. He is gratified, on the whole, by the consulta-

tion of doctors. His sociable spirit has been cheered by their company and their questions. When they leave him, his note is delightful in its naïveté :—

“I am glad they know (I have hid nothing from them), glad they consult (they hide nothing from one another), glad they write (they hide nothing from the world) [bulletins, doubtless, on the doors of the Deanery], glad that they prescribe physic and that there are remedies for the present case.”

There are delays in the course of his recovery, he does not gain strength as he should; “the disease hath established a kingdom, an empire in me.” But against these “secret conspiracies in the state” there is a magistrate, the doctor, and Donne, now beginning to feel languid, is content to leave it in his hands. But now a new enemy attacks him; he has lost his feverish exultation, and is invaded by a dreadful dejection of spirits. He consults the physicians about this :—

“They tell me it is my melancholy, the vapours. . . . But when I have said a ‘vapour,’ if I were asked again, ‘what is a vapour?’ I could not tell, it is so insensible a thing. So near nothing is that which reduces us to nothing !”

Something suppressed now comes forth in an eruption, and Donne (of course) indulges at once in that peculiarly favourite fancy of the seventeenth century, that the spots have formed a constellation and that his body is a firmament. The eruption takes its course, and meanwhile relieves him of his depression of spirits. He is still troubled with insomnia, and, to cure this or to relieve his weariness, the doctors give him opiates. He is extremely annoyed by the Cathedral bells, and would rather be a “prisoner in Turkey” than have to lie in a sick-bed “so near to that steeple, which never ceases, no more than the harmony of the spheres—and is more heard.” He has slept at Antwerp and at Rouen, but was never so afflicted by the bells as he is here.

“Here the bells can scarce solemnise the funeral of any person, but that I knew him or knew that he was my

neighbour. . . . Whomsoever these bells bring to the ground to-day, if he and I had been compared yesterday, perchance I should have been thought likelier to come to this preferment then, than he. . . . Where I lie, I could hear the psalm, and did join with the congregation in it, but I could not hear the sermon, and these latter bells are a repetition sermon to me. . . . God speaks to me aloud from that steeple, He whispers to me through these curtains, and . . . now, this bell tolling softly for another, says to me, 'Thou must die.'"

While he meditates long, and with some passages of incomparable charm, on the message of the bells of St. Paul's, he insensibly begins to recover; "at last the physicians, after a long and stormy voyage, see land." He rises from his bed, and is disappointed to find himself so weak; he is too ambitious, and is frightened with the dreadful consequences which would attend a relapse.

Nowhere in the whole of Donne's writings do we obtain quite so personal an impression of him as in these strange notes concerning the progress of his illness in the winter of 1623. Nowhere do we seem to come so close to him, to hear him speaking so intimately; and that no one has ever hitherto observed, so far as I know, the autobiographical value of these confessions is due, I believe, to the fact that, as Donne afterwards "digested" and published them, they are buried in masses of scholastic divinity, which has ceased to interest us. Removed from these dull wrappings, we may surely be struck with their acute observation, their subtle psychological freshness. Nothing like them had been noted down before; even in their wording they have an astonishing modernness; we can scarcely believe that their author was the contemporary of men like Camden and Selden. One wonders whether it is possible that Donne had seen the newly-published *Anatomy of Melancholy* and had taken his own lesson from that symptomatic and systematic monograph on hypochondria. But his method is infinitely sharper and more penetrating than Burton's. For once, too, Donne was excluded from his library, and we are freed from the shackles of his terrible encyclopedic learning.

When his illness was still a very dangerous one, Donne received a visit from a young man, who has already been mentioned in these pages, but who was henceforth to be one of his most trusted and intimate friends. This was Henry King, second son of the late Bishop of London, whom Donne had buried. His tastes were closely allied to those of the Dean; he worshipped poetry and divinity with the same ardour. He had versified in Donne's manner and by Donne's side; he was the first and never the least ardent of his disciples. To this charming man, with whom Donne was in daily communication since he had been made a prebendary in 1616, in his twenty-second year, and who was now Archdeacon of Colchester and chief Residentiary of the Cathedral of St. Paul's, Donne evidently opened his heart, and Henry King knew Donne's affairs. He knew that although he had "locked, sealed, and secured himself against all possibilities of falling into debt," yet the first year of his Deanery had cost him £400 over his income. Knowing Donne's extremely nervous temperament, King conceived that anxiety about money might be worrying him as he lay ill, and he approached his bedside with a proposition. He offered the Dean then and there the pecuniary advantages connected with a renewed lease of the best prebendal *corps*,<sup>1</sup> or church land, with which the Cathedral was endowed. Walton says that King did this because he thought Donne's recovery doubtful, but it is evidently that the reverse must be true; there is no use in offering ecclesiastical estate to a dying man.

The offer was one the nature of which it is not easy for us even to understand and impossible for a modern conscience to approve. It was that Donne should accept a lease of the entire profits of a church estate, probably for three lives. The idea, perhaps, was that he would pay some nominal sum, and become the "farmer" of the prebend. It was an evil and sacrilegious practice, and it does Donne much honour that he so instantly rejected it. It must be understood that the temptation was considerable, for the profits of such renewed leases were often

<sup>1</sup> The *corps* was the prebend or estate of a prebendary or canon.

enormous, and were, of course, directly robbed from God and the Church. King, however, acting after the fashion of the time, evidently meant no harm, and it is plain that he made his proposal with great delicacy and feeling, and that Donne was much touched. He raised himself in the bed, and, according to Walton, replied as follows:—

“ My most dear friend, I most humbly thank you for your many favours, and this in particular; but in my present condition I shall not accept of your proposal, for doubtless there is such a sin as sacrilege, if there were not it could not have a name in Scripture; and the primitive clergy were watchful against all appearances of that evil, and, indeed, then all Christians looked upon it with horror and detestation, judging it to be even an open defiance of the power and providence of Almighty God and a sad presage of a declining religion. But instead of such Christians, who had selected times set apart to fast and pray to God for a pious clergy, which they then did obey, our times abound with men that are busy and litigious about trifles and church ceremonies, and yet so far from scrupling sacrilege, that they make not so much as a query what it is; but I thank God I have, and dare not now, upon my sick-bed, when Almighty God hath made me useless to the service of the Church, make any advantages out of it. But if He shall again restore me to such a degree of health as again to serve at His altar, I shall then gladly take the reward which the bountiful benefactors of this church have designed me, for God knows my children and relations will need it; in which number my mother (whose credulity and charity has contracted a very plentiful to a very narrow estate) must not be forgotten. But, Dr. King, if I recover not, that little worldly estate that I shall leave behind me (that very little, when divided into eight parts) must, if you deny me not so charitable a favour, fall into your hands, as my most faithful friend and executor, of whose care and justice I make no more doubt than of God’s blessing on that which I have conscientiously collected for them; but it shall not be augmented on my sick-bed, and this I declare to be my unalterable resolution.”

This account, not given by Walton in 1640, was added in the edition of 1659, no doubt from the communication of Henry King himself.

The Dean's convalescence was slow, and he employed part of it in constructing a little pious book out of the notes he had taken in his illness. He called it *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions and Several Steps in my Sickness, digested into Meditations, Expostulations and Prayers*, and dedicated it to Prince Charles. It was published in a small stout duodecimo of 630 pages, very early in 1624, another edition, in smaller type, later in the same year, and others later; it was a popular book, but has never been reprinted since the seventeenth century.

Three letters to Sir Robert Ker belong to the months of Donne's convalescence, February and March 1624. The first accompanied the proofs of the *Devotions*, and consulted his friend as to the propriety of dedicating that work to the Prince of Wales.

“To Sir ROBERT KER.

“Though I have left my bed, I have not left my bedside. I sit there still, and as a prisoner discharged sits at the prison door to beg fees, so sit I here to gather crumbs. I have used this leisure to put the Meditations, had in my sickness, into some such order as may minister some holy delight. They arise to so many sheets (perchance twenty) as that, without staying for that furniture of an Epistle, that my friends importuned me to print them, I importune my friends to receive them printed. That, being in hand, through this long trunk that reaches from St. Paul's to St. James's I whisper into your ear this question, whether there be any uncomeliness or unseasonableness in presenting matter of devotion or mortification to that Prince, whom I pray God nothing may ever mortify but holiness. If you allow my purposes in general, I pray cast your eye upon the title and the epistle, and rectify me in them. I submit substance and circumstance to you, and the poor author of both.—Your very humble and very thankful servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.”

*“To Sir ROBERT KER.<sup>1</sup>*

“SIR,—Your man surprised me as I came into my house, and loth to stay him or defraud myself of reading your letter, I read it in his sight, and said, though not so much as I would have written, yet, perchance, more than he hath thought necessary to remember. I had been long in my chamber, and practised how to put out breath, almost to my last gasp; and now I had been abroad to take in air, and as a man that hath received money, but not yet received it, so I had taken in breath, but not articulated it, nor, perchance, said enough to let you know that I shall lose the honour of waiting upon you at your time; which I feel the more because I desired much to have been in my Lord Chancellor’s sight. For, as when I sit still and reckon all my old master’s royal favours to me, I return evermore to that, that he first inclined me to be a minister. So, when I reckon all the favours that I have received from my Lord Chancellor I return to that, that he was the first man that ever presented my name to my Lord Carlisle, and entered me into his service. When I say grace and bless my own dinner I shall mean yours also, and be your chaplain though absent. This I have gained by my going abroad to-day (for I went to visit your servants at Chelsea), that if I must despair of an ability to come to your house, where you are now, yet I hear there you are coming to another house, where I have a prescription, and have not used to be kept out. And I hear, also, that your noble Lady is in that case that a double measure of prayers is due to her, which I shall faithfully pay, because therein I shall do a service to one of yours before he come into the world. As truly as all my soul is in every part of me, so hath every part of your family all the love and devotions of—Your humblest and thankfulest servant.”

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

"To Sir ROBERT KER.<sup>1</sup>

"SIR,—Your way into Spain was eastward, and that is the way to the land of perfumes and spices; their way hither is westward, and that is the way to the land of gold and of mines. The wise men who sought Christ laid down both their perfumes and their gold at the feet of Christ, the Prince of Peace. If all confer all to His glory and to the peace of His Church. Amen. But now I consider in cosmography better, they and we differ not in East and West; we are much alike easterly. But yet, *Oriens nomen ejus*, the East is one of Christ's names,<sup>2</sup> in one prophet, and, *Filius Orientis est Lucifer*, the East is one of the devil's names in another, and these two differ diametrically. And so in things belonging to the worship of God, I think we shall. Amen. But the difference of our situation is in North and South, and you know that though the labour of any ordinary artificer in that trade will bring East and West together (for if a flat map be but pasted upon a round globe the farthest east and the farthest west meet and are all one), yet all this brings not North and South a scruple of a degree the nearer. There are things in which we may, and in that wherein we should not, my hope is in God and in Him, in whom God hath so evidently work, we shall not meet. Amen. They have hotter days in Spain than we have here, but our days are longer, and yet we are hotter in our business here, and they longer about it there. God is sometimes called a giant, running a race, and sometimes is so slow-paced as that a thousand years make but a day with God, and yet still the same God. He hath His purposes upon our noble and vehement affections, and upon their wary and sober dispositions, and will use both to His glory. Amen.

"Sir, I took up this paper to write a letter; but my imaginations were full of a sermon before, for I write but a few hours before I am to preach, and so instead of a letter I send you a homily. Let it have thus much of a

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

<sup>2</sup> See the closing words of Donne's epitaph in St. Paul's.

letter, that I am confident in your love, and deliver myself over to your service. And thus much of a homily, that you and I shall accompany one another to the possession of heaven, in the same way wherein God put us at first, Amen.—Your very humble and very thankful servant in Christ, &c."

Of all Donne's relations, those for whom he seems to have entertained the warmest feelings were his brother and sister-in-law at Peckham, Sir Thomas and Lady Grymes. Their house was at all times a second home for the Dean's children. In his will, Donne mentions with particular affection this "my very worthy friend and kind brother-in-law," to whom he bequeaths his "striking clock" and his portrait of King James I. Constance Grymes, the child of this amiable couple, was Donne's god-daughter. At the time of confusion at the Deanery, it is probable that all the Dean's children were removed to Peckham to the charge of their aunt, and the incident now to be recounted was due to that circumstance.

While Donne was ill, his eldest daughter, Constance, married a man seven years older than her father, Edward Alleyn, the celebrated actor-manager and the founder of Dulwich College. This was a match into which sentiment did not enter. Constance had learned to know the Alleyns when she was quite a young girl, from their being neighbours and intimate acquaintances of her uncle and aunt at Peckham. Edward Alleyn lost his "religious and loving wife," Joan Woodward (who was perhaps of the family of Donne's friend Rowland Woodward), on the 28th of June 1623. He was not inclined to remain long a widower, and, within four months, had determined to marry Constance Donne, who was only twenty years of age, while Alleyn was fifty-eight. A paper found at Dulwich College, the draft of a letter from Alleyn to the Dean of St. Paul's, gives his own story of the courtship:—

"After affirmations made by Sir Thomas Grymes, on both sides, I was invited to your house [the Deanery] on the 21st of October 1623, when after dinner in your

parlour you declared your intention to bestow, with your daughter Constance, all the benefit of your prime lease, which, as you said, you knew would shortly be received, and that you were assured, if I stayed till Michaelmas next, to be worth £500 at the least, and whensoever it should rise to more, it should wholly be hers."

What this "prime lease" was there is some difficulty in understanding. It must have been a lease of lands belonging to St. Paul's Church, but it was evidently not so objectionable in character as that which had been suggested to Donne by Henry King. I suspect that the renewed lease in the latter case was to be had by Donne virtually for nothing, whereas the "prime lease" he had no doubt received or paid for in the ordinary course of business. The one transaction would be sacrilege, the other a common, though to our views an evil and indelicate custom.

There was more bargaining by both parties, and then :—

"This was accepted on all sides, and, yourself being called away by the coming of some ladies, you took your leave of Sir Thomas, and referred the accomplishing of this business to his direction. I presently returned to Peckham, and coming then to Constance, told her what had passed; and more, to show my love to her, of my own voluntary, I told her, before Sir Thomas, I would make it up to £1500, which was then, by yourself and Sir Thomas, extraordinary accepted on."

Poor Constance seems to have made no resistance. Perhaps she was glad to get away from the crowd of her little brothers and sisters even to the house of this eccentric and grasping old widower. The wedding took place on the 3rd of December 1623, at Camberwell, from the house of Sir Thomas and Lady Grymes, Donne being at that time at the height of his illness. Within the next year he had been obliged "many times" to refuse to lend money to his son-in-law, who fortunately died on the 25th of November 1626, and released Constance from an unseemly bond. The official title of Alleyn was "Squire of the Bears," and he seems to have merited it. On the 20th of

December 1623 Chamberlain wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton: "But the strangest match, in my opinion, is that Alleyn, the old player, hath lately married a young daughter of the Dean of Paul's, which I doubt will diminish his charity and devotion towards his two hospitals."

In this same year, 1623, Donne's eldest son, John, who showed signs of intellectual ability, passed from Westminster School and was elected a student of Christ Church, Oxford. George was now in his nineteenth year, and is believed to have entered the army. If John and George had left home, Donne's household was now reduced to four daughters, of whom Lucy, who was over fifteen, succeeded Constance as housekeeper. It seems probable that about this time Donne took his aged mother to reside with him in the Deanery.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for him that he had been kept in bed by illness while the King had conducted those distracted intrigues with the recusants, which laid James I. open to so much suspicion of favouring popery, and which yet, for reasons of policy, could not be publicly explained. Donne might have been asked to help in them, and might have been fatally embroiled. All through the last months of 1623 and the early half of 1624, the action of the old King was absolutely bewildering to his simpler subjects, and filled the popular mind with alarm. Was the staunch Defender of the Faith going to end his days in the hateful arms of Rome? Once more James I., provoked and exasperated by the imbroglio with Spain, looked round upon his courtiers and people with suspicion. Lord Middlesex fell first, and then, in July 1624, Lord Digby (elevated since 1622 to the Earldom of Bristol) was driven from court and imprisoned in his house at Sherborne. It was doubtless in August of that year that the strange interview took place which Walton so vividly describes:—

"He was once, and but once, clouded with the King's displeasure, and it was about this time, which was occasioned by some malicious whisperer, who had told his Majesty that Dr. Donne had put on the general humour of the pulpits, and was become busy in insinuating a fear of the

King's inclining to popery, and a dislike of his government ; and particularly for the King's then turning the evening lectures into catechising, and expounding the Prayer of our Lord, and of the Belief, and Commandments. His Majesty was the more inclinable to believe this, for that a person of nobility and great note, betwixt whom and Dr. Donne there had been a great friendship, was at this very time discarded the court (I shall forbear his name, unless I had a fairer occasion), and justly committed to prison ; which begot many rumours in the common people, who in this nation think they are not wise unless they be busy about what they understand not, and especially about religion.

"The King received this news with so much discontent and restlessness, that he would not suffer the sun to set and leave him under this doubt ; but sent for Dr. Donne, and required his answer to the accusation : which was so clear and satisfactory, that the King said, 'he was right glad he rested no longer under the suspicion.' When the King had said this, Dr. Donne kneeled down and thanked his Majesty, and protested his answer was faithful, and free from all collusion, and therefore 'desired that he might not rise till, as in like cases he always had from God, so he might from his Majesty, some assurance that he stood clear and fair in his opinion.' At which the King raised him from his knees with his own hands, and 'protested he believed him ; and that he knew he was an honest man, and doubted not but that he loved him truly.' And, having thus dismissed him, he called some lords of his council into his chamber, and said, with much earnestness, 'My Doctor is an honest man ; and, my Lords, I was never better satisfied with an answer than he hath now made me ; and I always rejoice when I think that by my means he became a divine.'"

Who the "malicious whisperer" may have been we cannot guess ; but we may well suppose that either Buckingham or Carlisle arranged this audience with the King, confident that no better means could be found of disabusing the suspicious old monarch's mind than by bringing Donne face to face with him. There is no certainty that James I. ever heard Donne preach again.

We find little to record in the rest of Donne's life in the early part of 1624. He was appointed Prolocutor of the Lower House when Convocation met in February, greatly against his will. He was, indeed, scarcely convalescent, and although he delivered an opening address to the House, he declared that "he had done his utmost to escape a burden which he was unable to support." Of his preferment to the Vicarage of St. Dunstan's in the West we must speak in another chapter.

During his long convalescence the instinct of verse, which had never entirely left him, but which of late years had slumbered, was awakened in Donne, and he composed one of the most beautiful of his divine poems—

#### AN HYMN

TO GOD THE FATHER.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,  
 Which was my sin, though it were done before ?  
 Wilt Thou forgive that sin through which I run,  
 And do run still, though still I do deplore ?  
 When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done,  
 For I have more.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin, which I have won  
 Others to sin, and made my sin their door ?  
 Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun  
 A year or two, but wallow'd in a score ?  
 When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done,  
 For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun  
 My last thread, I shall perish on the shore ;  
 But swear by Thyself, that at my death Thy Son  
 Shall shine as He shines now, and heretofore ;  
 And having done that, Thou hast done,  
 I fear no more.

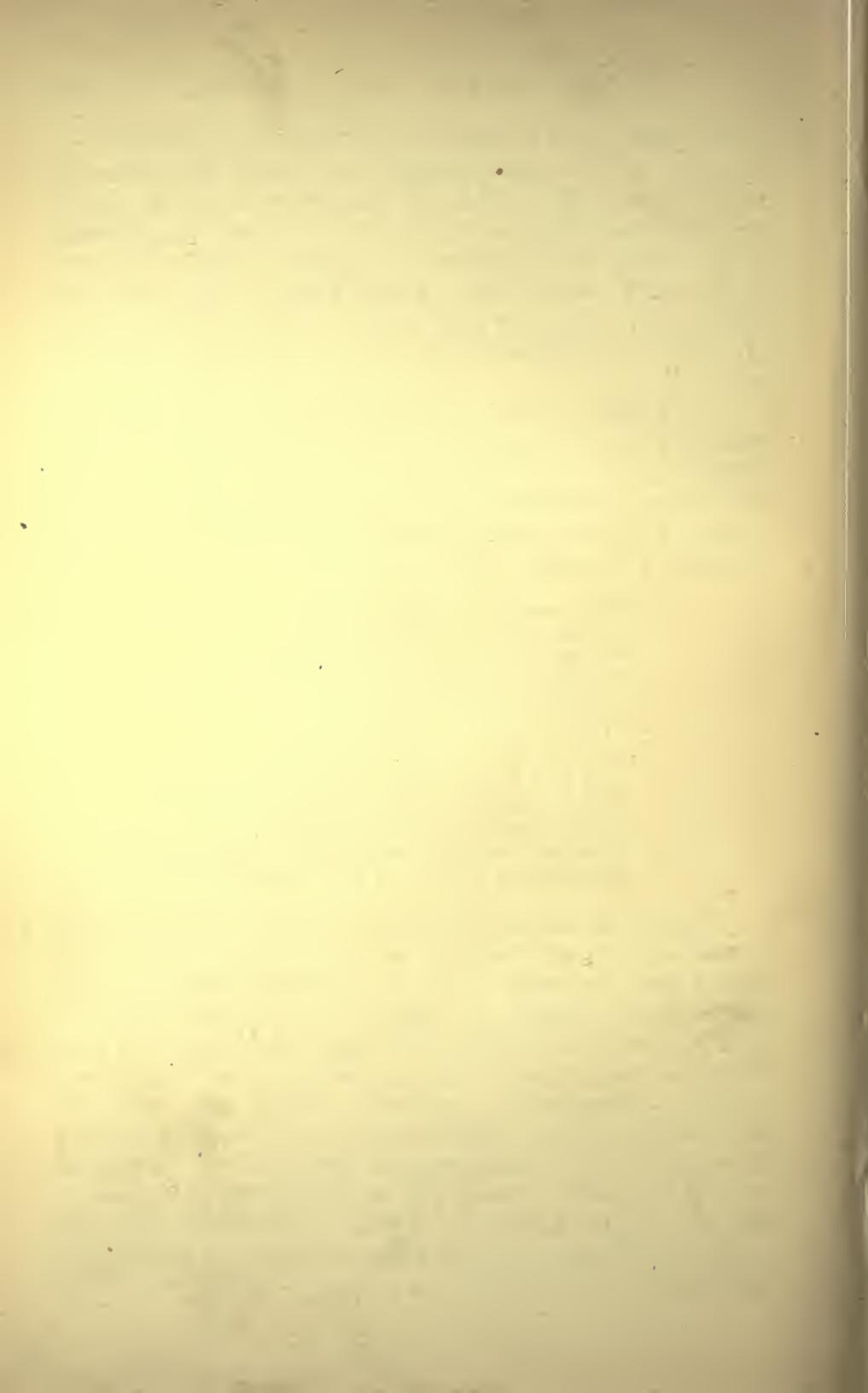
We learn from Walton that, on his recovery, Donne caused this hymn to be "set to a most grave and solemn tune, and to be often sung to the organ by the choristers of St. Paul's Church, in his own hearing, especially at the evening service; and at his return from his customary devotions in that place, did occasionally say to a friend,

' The words of this hymn have restored to me the same thoughts of joy that possessed my soul in my sickness, when I composed it. And, O the power of church music ! that harmony, added to this hymn, has raised the affections of my heart, and quickened my graces of zeal and gratitude ; and I observe that I always return from paying this public duty of prayer and praise to God with an unexpressible tranquillity of mind, and a willingness to leave the world.' "

To a Mr. Tilman, who had taken orders, Donne addressed a copy of verses in which he defined his mature conception of the duty of a minister. The lines are interesting, and reflect the temper in which the Dean, in returning to a measure of health, now regarded the principal business of his public life :—

" What function is so noble, as to be  
Ambassador to God and destiny ?  
To open life ? to give kingdoms to more  
Than kings give dignities ? to keep Heaven's door ?  
Mary's prerogative was to bear Christ ; so  
'Tis preachers' to convey Him, for they do,  
*As angels out of clouds, from pulpits speak,*  
And bless the poor beneath, the lame, the weak.  
If, then, the astronomers, whereas they spy  
A new-found star, their optics magnify,  
How brave are those, who with their engines can  
Bring Man to Heav'n, and Heav'n again to man ! "

Donne's consciousness of his pre-eminent responsibility as a preacher was now complete, and for the rest of his life he blazed from the pulpit like a star, holding himself obscured and as far as possible unobserved in any other orbit. So now his last mortification had begun, and from this time forth we must conceive him as more a voice than a man, almost a disembodied inspiration calling the world up heavenwards from a height which already seemed above a mortal pitch, the human preacher dissolved into "a portion of the Eternal," as Shelley says, become "a splendour in the firmament of time." In this extraordinary spiritual supremacy, Donne was now alone among the divines of his generation.



ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST

1624-1627



## CHAPTER XIV

### ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST

1624-1627

WALTON thought that "immediately after his admission into his Deanery, the Vicarage of St. Dunstan's in the West fell" to Donne. This was not the case, although the reversion of that living had been given him soon after his taking orders by the patron, Richard, third Earl of Dorset and grandson of that illustrious poet of the *Induction*, who is better known to us as Thomas Sackville. St. Dunstan's was at this time held by Dr. Thomas White, who had been presented to it in 1575 by the poet, who was then Lord Buckhurst. At Oxford White had attracted the notice of Bishop Aylmer by his eloquence as a preacher, and in the year of the Armada he became Prebendary of Mora in St. Paul's Cathedral. During the next five years he was promoted in rapid succession to the Treasurership of Salisbury, to a Canonry at Christ's Church, Oxford, and to another in the Chapel Royal at Windsor. "Besides building and endowing almshouses at Bristol where he was born, he founded Sion College in his lifetime, and the Professorship of Moral Philosophy at Oxford, which still bears his name, and he provided for the endowment of a Lectureship at St. Dunstan's, the lecturer being required to preach every Sunday and Thursday afternoon." He has been confounded with the Thomas White who was Chancellor of Salisbury, quite a different person, who died in 1588.

On the 1st of March 1624, Dr. White, who was about seventy-five years of age, died, and was buried in the chancel of St. Dunstan's Church. But the munificent

friend and patron to whom Donne owed the presentation scarcely lived to see his forethought rewarded, for on the 28th of the same month, Richard, Earl of Dorset, died, still a young man. He was succeeded by his brother Edward, "beautiful, graceful and vigorous," as Clarendon describes him, and then in the flush of his goodly prime. He proved no less kind a friend to Donne than his brother had been, though his partiality to poets was less marked. It is not quite certain in what practical degree Donne's purse was benefited by the appointment to St. Dunstan's in the West. According to papers in Sion College, the Vicarage produced in Donne's time £240, 4s. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in tithes. But, "after payment of all outgoings and the stipend of his curate," Donne was justified in saying at the end of his life that "I make not a shilling profit of St. Dunstan's as a churchman," that is to say, as a holder of vicarial tithes. On the 11th of May 1624, he sublet the rectorial tithes, for which he thought he paid the Earl of Dorset too high a rent, for twenty years to ten of his parishioners for £200 per annum, reserving the Vicarage and two houses adjoining. Donne paid all the King's dues. The Vicarage was situated in Fleet Street, close to Fetter Lane, and was occupied by Donne's substitute in the pulpit of St. Dunstan's, Matthew Griffiths, whom Donne afterwards presented to the Rectory of St. Mary Magdalen, in Old Fish Street.

Donne must have succeeded White without any delay in the course of March 1624. Walton was misinformed when he said that the fourth Earl "confirmed" the gift of the advowson; there can be no question that he would have done so had it been necessary. But the third Earl lived long enough to see Donne in possession, and the fourth Earl, who was at Florence when his brother died on the 28th of March, did not return to England until the end of May. He entered into his hereditary duties as Master of Ashdown Forest, Steward of the Honours of Aquila and Pevensey, and those other offices which made the Lords of Dorset all-powerful in the county of Sussex, in the middle of June of this year 1624. Donne preached his first sermon at St. Dunstan's on the 11th of April, and

his text was, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and leave no child," a passage startlingly appropriate to the predicament in which the family of his noble patrons found itself.

Of this first sermon, Dr. Jessopp gives the following interesting analysis:—"The sermon is a kind of manifesto setting forth the preacher's view of the reciprocal duties of the pastor and his flock. It was evidently composed with great care, and is expressed in language almost homely in its simplicity, very unlike the ordinary style of Donne's most studied sermons delivered on important occasions. 'From these words,' he says, 'we shall make our approaches and application to the present occasion. . . . First, there is a marriage in the case—the taking and leaving the Church is not an indifferent, an arbitrary thing; it is a marriage, and marriage implies honour; it is an honourable estate, and that implies charge; it is a burdensome state—there is honour and labour in marriage. *You* must be content to afford the honour, *we* must be content to endure the labour. . . . It is a marriage after the death of another. . . . It must be a brother, a spiritual brother—a professor of the same faith—that succeeds in this marriage, in this possession, and this government of that widow Church. . . . And then, being thus married to this widow—taking the charge of this Church—he must "perform the duty of a husband's brother." *He* must—it is a personal service, not to be done always by proxy and delegates; he *must*, and he must *perform*—not begin well and not persist, commence and not consummate; but perform the work—as it is a duty. . . . It is a duty in us to do that we are sent for, by His word and His sacraments to establish you in His holy obedience and His rich and honourable service, . . . and that the true right of people and pastor and patron be preserved, to the preservation of love and peace and good opinion of one another.'

"In the course of the sermon all these points are dwelt on, and he ends by emphasising and recapitulating what he had said. 'If the pastor love, there will be a double labour; if the people love, there will be double respect.

For where the congregation loves the pastor, he will forbear bitter reproofs and wounding increpations, and where the pastor loves his congregation, his rebukes, because they proceed out of love, will be acceptable and well interpreted by them, . . . that love being the root of all, the fruit of all may be peace; love being the soul of all, the body of all may be unity, which the Lord of unity and concord grant to us all for His Son Jesus Christ's sake.'

"Such was Donne's manifesto when he preached for the first time in St. Dunstan's pulpit; it was a noble setting forth of a high ideal, which for the remaining seven years of his life he strove with all his heart to carry out, and in doing so he found his reward."

Donne's acceptance of the living of St. Dunstan's raised the question of his continuing to hold that of Blunham, which he was not willing to resign. This was settled on the 4th of March 1624, by a Royal Grant to John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the King, of "dispensation to hold the Rectory of Blunham, in the Diocese of Lincoln, and one other benefice [Sevenoaks] in addition to those which he now holds," St. Dunstan's and the Deanery of St. Paul's. His preferments, therefore, were now numerous, and in spite of all his occasional grumblings, the emoluments considerable. This dispensation was granted at the special interposition of the Duke of Buckingham, and it was so worded as to enable Donne to continue to hold Blunham and Sevenoaks whatever ecclesiastical or other spiritual promotions it might afterwards please the King to grant him.

Some letters belonging to the early months of 1624, and referring to gift-copies of the little volume of *Devotions*, may here find their place. The first of these is endorsed "upon presentation of a Book of Meditations" to the Queen of Bohemia. There could be no moment in the distracted career of that most unfortunate princess at which the consolations of religion could be more welcome to her. The incapacity of her husband was now proved to be hopeless, and to be gradually plunging Germany into an anarchical condition. The battle of Stadtloo (July 27,

1623) had seen vanish Frederick's last hope of regaining, not any longer the throne of Bohemia merely, but even his own Electoral Palatinate. James I., almost maddened by his foiled attempts to unravel the tangle of his son-in-law's mismanaged affairs, was as surly as a sick bear to his daughter; the Queen of Bohemia was privately agitated by the proposed political marriage of her young Protestant son to the Catholic daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand. Poor, distracted, in exile, it needed all Elizabeth's cheerful philosophy to keep her from giving way to despair when the crisis of her ruin came at Christmas 1623.

*“To the Queen of BOHEMIA.<sup>1</sup>*

“Your Majesty hath had the patience heretofore to hear me deliver the messages of God to yourself. In the hearing of me deliver my messages to God, I can hope for the continuance of your Majesty's patience. He is a very diffident man that can doubt of that virtue in your Majesty, for of your great measure of that virtue the world hath had more proof than it needed. But I consider always that it had been in me a disloyal thing (I afford no milder a word to that fault) to have any way conjured to the exercising of your Majesty's patience; therefore I have forborne to thrust into your Majesty's presence my name, or anything which hath proceeded from me, though always the dignity of the subject, and sometimes the express commandment, sometimes the gracious alarum of your most royal father, might have gone far in my excuse, in such a boldness to your Majesty. Now (for, since I am doing a bold action, I may speak words that sound of boldness too) I surprise your Majesty, I take you at an advantage; I lay an obligation upon you, because that which your brother's highness hath received your Majesty cannot refuse. By your own example you can suffer, by his example you may be pleased to accept this testimony of the zeal of your, &c.”

[Enclosed in a letter dated February 1, 1624.]

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<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

To which the Queen of Bohemia replied as follows:—

“*To Doctor Donne.*<sup>1</sup>

“GOOD DOCTOR,—None should have cause to pity me, nor myself to complain, had I met with no other exercise of my patience than the hearing of you deliver (as you call them) the messages of God unto me, which truly I never did but with delight, and, I hope, some measure of edification. No doubt then but I shall read yours to Him with pleasure, and I trust by His assistance, to whom they are directed, not without profit. For what I have already read I give you hearty thanks, and if my better fortunes make progression with my reading (whereof I now begin to have good hope), I will not fail upon any good occasion to acknowledge this courtesy at your hands, and in the meantime I remain yours, &c.”

It may be conjectured that the following note,<sup>2</sup> now first printed, was addressed to some great lady in the suite of the Queen of Bohemia:—

“MADAM,—Except God had been pleased to let me into heaven, to the gates whereof by this sickness He brought me, I could not be possessed of better society nor better friends than He hath offered me in this world of them. Your Ladyship hath been content, and of that noble friendship, this is the present exercise, that you would receive this book from me; and if upon conference with your noble husband (whose hand I kiss) it appear not an over-boldness in me to proceed so, I beseech you to present the other book and the letter to her Majesty, who is ever joined by me with my own soul in all the prayers of your Ladyship’s very humble servant in Christ Jesus,

“*Jo. Donne.*

“*1st February 1623[4].*”

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

<sup>2</sup> MS. in possession of J. H. Anderdon, Esq.

*"To the Duke of BUCKINGHAM."<sup>1</sup>*

"MY MOST HONOURED LORD,—Once I adventured to say to the Prince's highness that I was sure he would receive a book from me the more graciously because it was dedicated to your Grace; I proceed justly upon the same confidence that your Grace will accept of this, because that it is his by the same title.

"If I had not overcome that reluctance, which I had in myself, of presenting *Devotions and Mortifications* to a young and active Prince, I should not have sent them unto your presence, who have done so much, and have so much to do in this world, as that it might seem enough to think seriously of that. No man, in the body of story, is a full president to you; nor any of future may promise himself an adequation to his president if he make you his. Kings have discerned the seed of high virtue in many men, and upon that gold they have set their stamp, their favour upon those persons; but then those persons have laboured under the jealousy of the future heir, and some few have had the love of king and prince, but not of the kingdom; and some of that too, but not of the Church. God hath united your Grace so to them all, that as you have received obligations from the King and Prince, so you have laid obligations upon the State and Church. They above love you out of their judgment, because they have loved you, and we below love you out of our fulness, because you have loved us, and God ever loved them whom good men loved. God's Privy Seal is the testimony of a good conscience, and His Broad Seal is the outward blessing of this world. But since the pillar of fire was seconded with a pillar of cloud, and all His temporal blessings have some partial eclipses, and the purest conscience some remorse, so, though He hath made your way to glory, glory, and brought you in the arms and bosom of His vicegerent, into His own arms and bosom, yet then must we prize a minute of true light in a natural death.

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection; there is also a copy of this letter, with variations, in *Cabala*.

“ And as the reading of the actions of great men may affect you for great actions, so for this our necessary defect of dying (which, I hope, shall be the only step that ever you shall pass to that, and, by that, late) you may receive some remembrances from the *Meditations and Devotions* of your Grace’s devoted servant,

J. DONNE.”

This letter, also from the Tobie Matthew Collection, may belong to the same period :—

[*To the Earl of DORSET ?*]

“ MY LORD,—To make myself believe that our life is something, I use in my thoughts to compare it to something ; if it be like anything that is something. It is like a sentence, so much as may be uttered in a breathing ; and such a difference as is in styles is in our lives, contracted and dilated. And, as in some styles there are open parentheses, sentences within sentences, so there are lives within our lives. I am in such a parenthesis now (in a convalescence) when I thought myself very near my period. God brought me into a low valley, and from thence showed me high Jerusalem upon so high a hill as that He thought it fit to bid me stay and gather more breath. This I do by meditating, by expostulating, by praying ; for, since I am barred of my ordinary diet, which is reading, I make these my exercises, which is another part of physic. And these meditations, and expostulations, and prayers I am bold to send to your Lordship ; that, as this which I live now is a kind of second life, I may deliver myself over to your Lordship in this life with the same affection and devotion as made me yours in all my former life ; and as long as any image of this world sticks in my soul, shall ever remain in your Lordship’s, &c.”

Greatly occupied, in his slow convalescence, by the duties of his Deanery and of St. Dunstan’s, Donne slips from our view for several months. He preached on the

13th of June to the new Earl of Exeter, William Cecil, and his company in his chapel of St. John's. The Earl was Sir Robert Drury's brother-in-law. A few letters carry us on to the close of this uneventful year, 1624. The first are addressed to Sir Nicholas Throckmorton Carew, Donne's brother-in-law, Lord of the Manor of Mitcham :—

*“To the Right Worshipful Sir N. CAREW, at Bedington.<sup>1</sup>*

“SIR,—It must always be my first work to portray to you my thanks for your favours of all kinds, and to accompany my poor thanks with my best prayers for your happiness in yourself and all your family, Amen. Besides I have at this time an occasion of doing my Lord of Dorset a service in discharging a commandment of his. He remembers himself to be in your debt for a free courtesy that you did him out of your park, and he reserves a stag for you in return of your favour. He expects from me (for I have undertaken to tell him) at what time it may be most acceptable to you. Upon Saturday we make account to go to Knolle together. If before that, or at any time, you will be pleased to let me know what day you will command it to be sent, it shall be so. Sir, I rest your poor friend and servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.

“At my house at St. Paul's,  
1st September 1624.”

Knolle was the Earl of Dorset's country seat. These letters show on what intimate terms Donne already stood with the new peer, who evidently valued the Dean no less than his brother had done.

*“To Sir NICHOLAS CAREW.<sup>2</sup>*

“SIR,—I have worn out my horses in your progress, and since that I cannot, as I thought to have done, come over to see you. And, besides, I am forced to entreat

<sup>1</sup> Domestic State Papers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

a favour at your hands, which is, that if it be no inconvenience unto you, you would let these horses with my man Frank [?] run in your park, but if your other friends have overcharged you with importunities of this kind, I pray let not me add to it by my unmannerness. I made the man haste to send now, because yesterday I heard of a dangerous fall that your second son had taken, and was very desirous (as I hope I shall) to hear of his amendment. And so, Sir, with my humble thanks for all your former favours to me, and your remembrance of my service to your good lady, and my prayers to our Blessed Saviour to bless you and yours in this and your next world, I rest your poor friend and servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.

“At my house at Drury House,  
September 17th.”

The address of this letter is very extraordinary, and I think that Donne has here written, by inadvertence, the address which had been his for so many years instead of the Deanery. It is just possible, but very unlikely, that he continued to occupy rooms in Drury House.

The Lady Kingsmell, to whom the next letter was addressed, had been the Bridget White to whom, in earlier years, Donne had gaily written some notes which have been published already in their place. Her husband, Sir Henry Kingsmell, died on the very day on which Donne indited this elaborate letter of consolation to the widow.

“To the Honourable Lady the Lady KINGSMELL upon  
the death of her husband.<sup>1</sup> ✓

“MADAME,—Those things which God dissolves at once, as He shall do the sun and moon and those bodies at the last conflagration, He never intends to reunite again; but in those things which He takes in pieces, as He does man and wife in these divorces by death, and in single persons by the divorce of body and soul, God hath another

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters of 1651*.

Also J. Mathew's *Collect* <sup>2</sup>, 106 ff.

purpose to make them up again. That piece which He takes to Himself is presently cast in a mould, and in an instant made fit for His use; for heaven is not a place of a proficiency, but of present perfection. That piece which He leaves behind in this world, by the death of a part thereof, grows fitter and fitter for Him by the good use of His corrections and the entire conformity to His will.

"Nothing disproportions us, nor make us so uncapable of being reunited to those whom we loved here, as murmuring or not advancing the goodness of Him who hath removed them from hence. We would wonder to see a man who, in a wood, were left to his liberty to fell what trees he would, take only the crooked and leave the straightest trees; but that man hath perchance a ship to build and not a house, and so hath use of that kind of timber; let not us who know that in God's house there are many mansions, but yet have no model, no design of the form of that building, wonder at His taking in of His materials, why He takes the young and leaves the old, or why the sickly overlive those that had better health. We are not bound to think that souls departed have divested all affections towards them whom they left here; but we are bound to think that for all their loves they would not be here again. Then is the will of God done in earth, as it is in heaven, when we neither pretermit His actions nor resist them, neither pass them over in an inconsideration as though God had no hand in them, nor go about to take them out of His hands as though we could direct Him to do them better.

"As God's Scriptures are His will, so His actions are His will; both are testaments, because they testify His mind to us. It is not lawful to add a schedule to either of His wills, as they do ill who add to His written will, the Scriptures, a schedule of Apocryphal books; so do they also, who to His other will, His manifested actions, add Apocryphal conditions and a schedule of such limitations as these, 'if God would have stayed thus long,' or 'if God would have proceeded in this or this manner I could have borne it.' To say that our afflictions

are greater than we can bear is so near to despairing as that the same words express both; for when we consider Cain's words in that original tongue in which God spake, we cannot tell whether the words be, My punishment is greater than can be born, or, My sin is greater than can be forgiven.

"But, Madame, you who willingly sacrificed yourself to God in your obedience to Him in your own sickness cannot be doubted to dispute with Him about any part of you which He shall be pleased to require at your hands. The difference is great in the loss of an arm or a head, of a child or a husband; but to them who are incorporated into Christ, their head, there can be no beheading; upon you, who are a member of the spouse of Christ, the Church, there can fall no widowhood, nor orphanage upon those children to whom God is father. I have not another office by your husband's death, for I was your chaplain before in my daily prayers, but I shall enlarge that office with other collects than before, that God will continue to you that peace which you have ever had in Him, and send you quiet and peaceable dispositions in all them with whom you shall have anything to do in your temporal estate and matters of this world; Amen.—Your Ladyship's very humble and thankful servant in Christ Jesus,

"J. DONNE.

"At my poor house at St. Paul's,  
26th October 1624."

A little group of hitherto unpublished letters now throws a curious light on the ecclesiastical procedure of the time. Donne, in connection with the Chapter of St. Paul's, had in his gift the living of St. Faith's, in the City of London. This belonged to the Dean and Chapter to present, and the members of the Chapter took turns in presentation. It was now Donne's turn, "according to our courses." He had promised the living to a friend of his own, but, when the cure became vacant by the promotion of the incumbent, William Woodford, the King demanded

St. Faith's for a Royal protégé, Emmanuel Smith. The Dean and Chapter had nothing to do but to submit as gracefully as they might.

*“From King JAMES I. to the Dean of ST. PAUL'S.<sup>1</sup>*

“Trusted, &c.,—We are moved by our especial favour to William Woodford, now minister of St. Faith's Parish, to dispose of him in another place, which, for some consideration, cannot well be effected without your consent and allowance of Emmanuel Smith to succeed him in the Cure of St. Faith's. Who being very able and sufficient to discharge that duty, and now having a gracious desire to accommodate Woodford, we have taken it upon us to procure your acceptance and admittance of Smith to that cure, and do by these, our letters, earnestly recommend him to be placed in that cure by your favour and at our request, which, in regard of our engagement to prefer Woodford, we shall take as done in duty and respect unto us, and be ready to acknowledge it in all occasions of yours to your advantage.

*“27th November 1624.”*

*“To Secretary CONWAY.<sup>2</sup>*

“May it please your Honour,—I received by the hands of Mr. Woodford a letter from our most gracious master to myself and the other presidentiaries of our church, recommending unto us Mr. Smith to succeed Mr. Woodford in St. Faith's Church. Though it be thus much to your Honour's trouble, it behoves me to give an account thereof. That church is, at this accordance according to our courses, in my particular gift, as, also, it fell out to be so when Mr. Woodford received it at my hands. And upon just confidence in that title, I had given the next presentation thereof (before any intimation or imagination of his Majesty's pleasure) to a person that hath deserved a greater service from me; so that, to make myself able to

<sup>1</sup> Domestic State Papers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

do that which is always infinitely my desire, to serve his Majesty, I was put, first to work the Chapter and then to recall my grant, and, after, to waive my work and turn of presenting. All which being with the speediest diligence that I could use, and the very ready forwardness of our whole Chapter, accomplished, and thereby the way made certain and plain for Mr. Smith to enter thereupon as soon as it shall be made void, I thought it necessary to signify so much to your Honour; not that these circumstances of difficulty add anything to my merit, but that it adds to my gladness, that in one business I had so many occasions to testify my desire to serve his Majesty, from whom I have not only (as other men have) received my livelihood, but my priesthood. To which joy of mind I humbly beseech your Honour that I may have leave to add this other, that you will be pleased to return to your knowledge and retain in your favour your Honour's humblest servant in Christ Jesus,

“ J. DONNE.

“ At my poor house at Paul’s,  
7th December 1624.”

Hitherto, since he became Dean, Donne had retained the chamber in Lincoln’s Inn, to which he had a right as a Bencher. On the 29th of November a letter was read to the Council in which he resigned this privilege, “ with an expression of his humble thanks, and assurance of all readiness to serve this society, or any member thereof, with his best endeavours.” This resignation of the chamber “ was very kindly accepted by the members of the Bench.”

On the 31st of December 1624 the King thanked the Dean of St. Paul’s for bestowing the Cure of St. Faith’s on the Royal protégé.

One of the most shining lights in the Court of James I. was the young James Hamilton, Earl of Cambridge and Marquess of Hamilton, of whom Chamberlain wrote that he was “ in every way held the gallantest gentleman of both the nations.” He had been born in 1589, and in 1604 succeeded as second Marquess of Hamilton in the Scotch

peerage. He was in such high favour with the King that he was once spoken of as a possible husband for the Princess Elizabeth. He succeeded his uncle as fourth Earl of Arran in 1609, and in 1619 was created Lord Ennerdale and Earl of Cambridge in the English peerage. The Marquess of Hamilton was appointed Lord High Steward of the King's Household in 1624, and in that capacity may have come into personal contact with Donne as Chaplain-in-Ordinary. He died, rather suddenly, on the 3rd of March 1625, of what was called "a malignant fever," not improbably a form of the plague which was now gathering upon London. Sir Robert Ker applied to Donne for an elegiacal poem on this painful occasion, made more sinister by the rapidly failing health of the King himself. Donne replied:—

"*To Sir ROBERT KER.*

"SIR,—I presume you rather try what you can do in me, than what I can do in verse: you know my uttermost when it was best, and even then I did best when I had least truth for my subjects. In this present case there is so much truth as it defeats all poetry. Call, therefore, this paper by what name you will, and if it be not worthy of him, nor of you, nor of me, smother it, and be that the sacrifice. If you had commanded me to have waited on his body in Scotland and preached there, I would have embraced the obligation with more alacrity. But I thank you, that you would command to do that which I was loth to do, for even that hath given a tincture of merit to the obedience of your poor friend and servant in Christ Jesus,

"J. DONNE."

[*March 1625.*]

The elegy written thus to order is of much greater merit than we should be prepared to expect. *A Hymn to the Saints, and to Marquis Hamilton* is one of Donne's most poetical efforts in this direction. The elegist reminds the angels, in their jubilation over the arrival in heaven of

this charming young man, that their gain is mankind's loss :—

“ One of your orders grows by his access,  
But, by his loss, grow all our orders less,  
The name of Father, Master, Friend, the name  
Of Subject and of Prince, in one is lame ;  
Fair mirth is damp'd, and conversation black,  
The Household widow'd, and the Garter slack ;  
The Chapel wants an ear ; Council a tongue ;  
Story a theme ; and Music lacks a song.”

The poet indulges in his favourite ingenuities, and tells the angels that the Marquess deprived his body of all its beauty that he might send

“ that fair form it wore  
Unto the sphere of forms, and doth—before  
His soul shall fill up his sepulchral stone—  
Anticipate a resurrection.”

The whole of this poem has a prosodical character which is somewhat novel in Donne, and the careful student will detect in the rhythm of *A Hymn to the Saints, and to Marquis Hamilton*, perhaps for the first time in English poetry, a certain rhetorical wail, which was caught and intensified by both Crashaw and Cowley, and lasted until Tickell composed his splendid funeral chant for Addison.

“ *To the Right Honourable Sir ROBERT KER, at Court.*<sup>1</sup>

“ SIR,—I pursued my ambition of having the honour to kiss your hands somewhere, so far as to inform myself occasionally of my great neighbour. And I perceive he is under an inundation of uncertain comers, which he cannot divest, except I had your leave, to speak plain to him. A second inconvenience is that he is so deaf, that we must speak to the whole house if we will speak to him. And a third is, that I am in a riddling, rather a juggling, indisposition, fast and loose, and therefore dare not stir far. Yet, Sir, I am not thereby unfit to receive the honour of seeing you here, if greater business have not overcome, or worn

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

out, your former inclinableness to come into these quarters. If you shall be pleased to say to my man that you will make as though you dined with me to-day, and come, if your business require your going to his Lordship, you may dine with him after you have fasted with me. To-day, or any day which may be more yours, I ask it of you with all earnestness, on this side importunity, which is the detestation of your humblest and thankfulest servant,

“J. DONNE.”

[*March 1625?*]

In April or May 1625 Donne received from his eccentric son-in-law, Edward Alleyn, the long and very unpleasant letter to which we have already referred ; this still exists in the Dulwich Library.<sup>1</sup> The marriage had not turned out well, and the husband had succeeded in estranging his wife from her father. Alleyn's letter is one of stormy reproach, but he fails to persuade us that the Dean had committed any fault save a very natural impatience at his son-in-law's vagaries. We gain from it not a few interesting touches with regard to Donne's family life. We find confirmed, what other hints had revealed to us, that George, the Dean's second son, was his favourite child, and the one used to cajole his father when any of the others desired an indulgence. The quarrel between Donne and Alleyn arose from the habit the latter had of too constantly demanding “the common courtesy afforded to a friend, the loan of unuseful moneys,” that is to say, I suppose, moneys not being put to what Alleyn would consider any useful purpose. Probably Alleyn wanted Donne to join him in wild speculations.

Alleyn in this boisterous letter makes an “examination” of Donne's conduct to him ever since his betrothal to Constance in the autumn of 1623. We learn that the Dean hurried forward the marriage just before Christmas, when his illness was so severe, in the dread that, if he died, Alleyn might break it off, which, indeed, does not

<sup>1</sup> The MS. has lost address, signature, and date, but no doubt is possible regarding the first or second, while the third is revealed by internal evidence.

seem improbable. At first all went well, but Alleyn, who passed for a very rich man, and had, at one time or another, collected an unusual mass of property, was greatly in want of ready money, and wearied the Dean with his importunity. He protests that he has been a model husband: "I have all this time loved her, kept her and maintained her," but he calls God and the world to witness that her father is a terrible trial to him. It appears that in a final interview Donne told Alleyn plainly that he "must be branded either a fool or a knave," which Alleyn thinks was a hard saying, and one for which thirty years earlier—that is to say, in the days of his secretaryship to the Lord Keeper—Donne would have been questioned. The Dean must, indeed, have lost his temper, if it is true, as his son-in-law alleges, that, in the course of this interview, at something Alleyn said, Donne "presently being inflamed, sang twice, 'It is false, and a lie!'"

The charges he brings against Donne are paltry. He says that the Dean promised his daughter her mother's child-bed linen for a New Year's gift (March 1625), which, when the time came, he apparently forgot to give. But the great cause of offence is that Constance wished for "a little nag" of her father's "for her own self, to use for her health, to take the air." She had many times heard Donne say that he had no use for this animal, that, in fact, it was eating its head off in the Deanery stable. Constance lacked the courage to ask for the nag directly, but put her brother George up to wheedling the Dean for it. But the request came at an unlucky moment, perhaps just after the stormy interview with Alleyn, and "to prevent her of the comfort, the nag was suddenly sent away to Oxford." Constance had been sure of getting it, and was not a little disgusted. Also, "she having but two diamond rings," her father had asked her to give him one of them, promising to return it to her with three stones in it, which he had neglected to do.

Such are the serious accusations which the wounded and indignant Alleyn brings against his father-in-law, but the real bitterness seems to consist in the fact that

he had been told that whenever he came to town on business he might put up at the Deanery. After the occasion on which he was called a fool or a knave, however, on his having mentioned that he was coming to London and would "accept your former loving offer," he was roundly told that it would not be convenient. His revenge is petty. Lucy seems to have gone to the Alleyns to help to nurse Constance after the birth of the baby she expected, and Alleyn says that since Donne is so unkind, he shall expect him to pay for Lucy's keep. There is no record of a child born to Alleyn.

The sickness of the spring of 1625 was a matter of general concern. Among the deaths of prominent men, those of Southampton, Chichester, and Nottingham had removed from the roll of contemporary history some of its most interesting names. The King also had been ill, but had seemed to recover. The death of Hamilton, however, was a great shock to him, and on the 5th of March, at Theobalds, he suddenly fell ill of a tertian ague. When he was getting better, the old Countess of Buckingham took to physicking him, and the disease regained strength; on the 27th of the month he died. There does not seem to be any record of Donne's having preached to James I. during the winter or spring preceding his death.

The new king, Charles I., remained for a week shut up in St. James's Palace, no one but the Duke of Buckingham, his Gentleman of the Bedchamber, being admitted to speak with him. On the 2nd of April Donne received a command to preach in the afternoon, Sunday, and the following almost incoherent note to Sir Robert Ker betrays the extreme agitation with which he prepared to face his new and so mysteriously reticent master:—

"*To the Right Honourable Sir ROBERT KER, at Court.*<sup>1</sup>

"Sir,—This morning I have received a signification from my Lord Chamberlain, that his Majesty hath commanded to-morrow's sermon at St. James's; and that it is in the

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

afternoon (for, into my mouth there must not enter the word, after dinner, because that day there enters no dinner into my mouth). Towards the time of the service, I ask your leave that I may hide myself in your out-chamber, or if business, or privateness, or company make that inconvenient, that you will be pleased to assign some servant of yours to show me the closet, when I come to your chamber; I have no other way there but you, which I say not, as though I had not assurance enough therein, but because you have too much trouble thereby, nor I have no other end there, than the pulpit, you are my station, and that my exaltation; and in both I shall ever endeavour to keep you from being sorry for having thought well of, or being ashamed of having testified well for—Your poor and very true servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.”

[*April 2, 1625.*]

Ker was anxious to keep the Dean to dinner with him, but his shyness or sense of the awful importance of the occasion made him shrink from accepting the invitation. Another hurried note early next day:—

“*To the Right Honourable Sir ROBERT KER, at Court.*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—If I should refuse the liberty which you enlarge to me, of eating in your chamber, you might suspect that I reserved it for greater boldnesses, and would not spend it in this. But, in good faith, I do not eat before, nor can after, till I have been at home; so much hath my this year’s debility disabled me, even for receiving favours. After the sermon, I will steal into my coach home, and pray that my good purpose may be well accepted, and my defects graciously pardoned. Amen.—Yours entirely,

“J. DONNE.

“I will be at your chamber at one afternoon.”

[*April 3, 1625.*]

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

Having listened to the sermon with an air "very attentive and devout," the new King walked across St. James's Park and took up his work at Whitehall. The pallor of his face and his inscrutable solemnity greatly impressed his subjects; and though he was only twenty-five years old, he preserved the dignity and gravity of age. Donne's sense of insecurity before this new and unfamiliar patron can well be understood, so complete a despot in all church discipline was a monarch in those days. Nobody knew what the opinions of this exceedingly discreet young man might prove to be. The Puritan party boasted that he was with them, while the Catholics were no less eagerly convinced that he would repeal the Recusancy laws. However, as far as Donne was concerned, he was not long suffered to be in doubt. The King's commendation of his sermon of April 3 was promptly conveyed to the preacher, together with a command that it should be published, as it immediately was, under the title of *The First Sermon preached to King Charles*. In this year, moreover, Donne made his earliest collection of his discourses in the *Four Sermons upon Special Occasions*, a quarto volume, published in 1625. On the 26th of April, a few days before the body of James I. was removed from Denmark House to his burial, Donne preached again to "the nobility."

Donne took his place in the Chapter of St. Paul's as prebend of Chiswick, and on the 8th of May he preached the first of five sermons on portions of the Psalms which were required from him in that capacity. By this time the Plague had settled upon London in a quite unmistakable way. Parliament met on the 18th of June, but adjourned on the 11th of July to meet at Oxford on the 1st of August. What became of Donne at first is not known, but it is not very likely that he remained, with his family of young children, in the centre of infection. Many places were open to him. He did not, however, go to Blunham or to Camberwell, where he was almost at home, or to Knolle, where he was always extremely welcome. That he should stay in London, however, through that terrible September was impossible. The city was almost deserted, and

over 40,000 persons died; Donne's little parish of St. Dunstan's in the West suffered with more than average severity. Many of the City churches were closed for want of a congregation. He withdrew to Sir John Danvers' house in Chelsea, then completely severed from London, and shut himself up in it, receiving and paying no visits. He disappeared, indeed, so completely, that a rumour was spread abroad that he was dead. It is not certain to whom the following letter,<sup>1</sup> which has lost its address, was written; it is now for the first time printed. Donne says that he had heard that the recipient was to be one of the principal Secretaries of State in the place, that is, of Sir Albert Morton, who died of fever on the 6th of September, 1625. But his post was filled up without delay by Sir John Coke, a creature of Buckingham's. I think that the letter may very possibly be addressed to Dorset, who was on the high road to a variety of political honours.

“Our blessed Saviour establish in you, and multiply to you the seals of His eternal election, and testify His gracious purposes towards you in the next world for ever, by a right small succession of His outward blessings here, and sweeten your age by a rectified conscience of having spent your former time well, and sweeten your transmigration by a modest, but yet infallible assurance of a present union with Him. Amen.

“Your Lordship's letters of the 16th of August were delivered to me in November, in which I am first affected with that infection, which your Lordship told me, at that time reigned in those parts. I make it another argument that our good God hath a holy and gracious purpose to enwrap us in the same everlasting communion of joy, that enwraps us now in the same communion of calamity; for your number of 2000 a day was so far attempted by us, that in the City of London, and in a mile compass, I believe there died 1000 a day. But by reason that these infections are not so frequent with us, the horror, I presume, was greater here; for the citizens fled away, as out of a house

<sup>1</sup> Domestic State Papers.

on fire, and stuffed their pockets with their best ware, and threw themselves into the highways, and were not received so much as into barns, and perished so, some of them with more money about them than would have bought the village where they died. A justice of peace, into whose examination it fell, told me of one that died so with £1400 about him. I scattered my family, and to be near as I could to your inspection of the Church, I removed for a time to Chelsea, where within a few weeks the infection multiplied so fast as that it was no good manners to go to any other place, and so I have been in a secular monastery, and so far in a uniformity to your Lordship too.

“Of those good things which God intends us in the next world, He affords us a sense and an anticipation in this. So of those honours and rewards (which you, a word that we may be bolder with in matters of this nature, than when we speak of heaven) which your noble and powerful friends intend you here, I doubt not but you have good assurances from them. To me it was a great comfort, both for your merit and the State's acknowledgment (for, as St. Augustine says, temptations and God's disposing of them to our good, sometimes the devil is away, and sometimes the woman, so that God frustrates the temptation, so the devil counterfeits God so far, as yet sometimes he corrupts public instruments of State with private vices, and then there is no merit, sometimes he corrupts great persons with a facility of admitting calumnies, and so there is no acknowledgment, no reward of true merit, but in this we had our comfort), that before the seal was removed from the Bishop of Lincoln, there being speech of many removes, for ten days together, they were full of assurance that your Lordship was Secretary.

“My Lord, in the poor low way that I have gone in which I have not made many nor wide steps since my first leap which was my very entrance into this calling, I have found that missing and failing of some places have advanced my fortune, and that, though I were no great pretender nor thruster myself, yet the promises in which

some great person had enlarged themselves towards me, and even the voice and rumour which sometimes had invested me in some vacant places, conduced to my future settling. Your Lordship is in the hands of a person of whose largeness in doing good, we abound with examples of particular persons advanced by him ; but that exalts not my wonder, because he hath had it in his power to do so much. But, having also the same power to do harm, and having conferred great favour upon persons that have proved very unthankful and practising to his prejudice, and so been put to a necessity of declaring his power by diverting them, yet I cannot recover any example of any whom, in such a just displeasure, he hath left worse than he found him, but satisfying himself in having withdrawn those additions which he pinned upon him, hath left him to enjoy his former condition.

“ By so good a hand hath God made up mine, and is kneading and moulding your Lordship’s fortune, though fortunes of that great kind be elephants and belong to the womb, and not made up so soon as those that consist of pieces, and but a few and but small. In the parturition and bringing forth of so great issues, God is the midwife, for He refuses no name nor office to do His servants good. Amongst your men-midwives I shall always assist it with my humble prayers, both for the birth of your daughter and your honour in this world, and of your son with your happiness in the next. I will be bold to add this circumstance of gladness which we had in this approach of you to that place, that the opinion of Sir Dudley Carleton’s remove at that time (into whose place our worthy friend, Sir Robert Killigrew, is to go) did not divert nor retard your coming unto yours.

“ I stay thus long from giving your Lordship an account of some other parts of your Lordship’s letter, because when I come to that I am swallowed, and fall into your consideration of your Lordship’s continued favour to me and my obligations from your Lordship. I owe no man more, but am happy in my creditor, who is content to take such payment as I can

make, and to call my gratitude the silver and my devotion the gold in which he is willing to be paid. Amongst those favours this which your Lordship hath done now is a great one, to take so expressly into your consideration the recommendation of that gentleman of whom I wrote last to your Lordship. But I think that by this letter I do absolutely restore your Lordship to your liberty; for, since that time, he hath embraced another employment for Savoy; and though he be not yet gone, yet (I think) he hath had his Privy Seal some months. In this general dispersion I know not where to seek him, for the infection hath made this village so infamous as that I go not to court, though it be at Hampton. But except a letter of mine, within a month after this, refresh my request to your Lordship, be pleased to take my restoring to you to your full liberty as a part of payment of my debt for that forward favour to me. Almighty God bless you where you are and where you would be when you are there, and bring you hither, Amen.

“Your Lordship’s humblest and thankfulest  
servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.

“At Chelsea, 25th November 1625.

“Your Lordship always allowed me the freedom to communicate to you whatsoever I write or meditated; therefore I continue it in telling your Lordship how I have spent this summer in my close imprisonment. I have revised as many of my sermons as I had kept any note of, and I have written out a great many, and hope to do more. I am already come to the number of eighty, of which my son, who, I hope, will take the same profession or some other in the world of middle understanding, may hereafter make some use.”

Four weeks later he writes in a similar style to his old friend, Sir Henry Goodyer.

*“To the Worthiest Knight Sir HENRY GOODYER.<sup>1</sup>*

“SIR,—Our blessed Saviour, who abounds in power and goodness towards us all, bless you and your family with blessings proportioned to His ends in you all, and bless you with the testimony of a rectified conscience of having discharged all the offices of a father towards your discreet and worthy daughters, and bless them with a satisfaction and quiescence, and more, with a complacency and a joy, in good ends and ways towards them. Amen.

“Your man brought me your letter of the 8th of December this 21st of the same, to Chelsea, and gives me the largeness till Friday to send a letter to Paul’s house. There can scarce be any piece of that, or of those things whereof you require light from me, that is not come to your knowledge by some clearer way between the time of your letter and this. Besides, the report of my death hath thus much of truth in it, that though I be not dead yet I am buried. Within a few weeks after I immured myself in this house the infection struck into the town into so many houses, as that it became ill manners to make any visits. Therefore I never went to Knolle, nor Hanworth, nor Ke[ys]ton, nor to the Court since the Court came into these quarters, nor am yet come to London, therefore I am little able to give you account of high stages.

“Perchance you look not so low as our ordinary Gazette, and that tells us (with a second assurance) that the Duke of Brunswick, Christian, is dead of an ague. My Lord of Dorset, even upon the day when he should have been installed with his six fellows, fell sick at London, and at Court (which does not exalt all men) his fever was exalted to the plague, but he is in good convalescence. Of the navy I hear of no great limb come back yet but my Lord of Essex; something of the disappointing of the design they had is imputed to some difference in point of command between him and the Master of the Ordinance, my Lord of Valencia, but as yet there is little manifested. Already is issued a proclamation that there

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

be no disbanding of the soldiers upon their landing in what part soever, and that his Majesty hath present employment for them. What the main business at Hague hath been I know nothing, but I hear that their offer of pawning of jewels to a very very great value, to the States or private men, hath found no acceptance, at least found no money. Occasionally I heard from the Hague that the Queen, having taken into her care the promoving and advancing of some particular men's businesses by way of recommendations to the Duke, expressed herself very royally in your behalf. This I tell you not as though you knew it not, but because I had the fortune to see it in a letter of the simple gentlewoman from thence, by which name, if you know her not, I have omitted heretofore to tell you a good tale. They continue at Court, in the resolution of the Queen pastoral; when Queen Anne loved gambols, you loved the Court. Perchance you may doubt whether you be a thorough courtier, if you come not up to see this, the Queen a shepherdess. But I speak not this by way of counsel to draw you up, it is not only *Non Dominus, sed ego*, but *nec Deus nec ego*, to call you hither, but upon fair appearances of useful comings.

"Mr. George Herbert is here at the receipt of your letter, and with his service to you tells you that all of Uvedale house are well. I reserve not the mention of my Lady Huntingdon to the end of my letter as grains to make the gold weigh, but as tincture to make the better gold when you find room to intrude so poor and impertinent a name as mine is in her presence. I beseech you, let her Ladyship know that she hath sowed her favours towards me in such a ground that if I be grown better (as I hope I am) her favours are grown with me, and though they were great when she conferred them, yet (if I mend every day) they increase in me every day, and therefore every day multiply my thankfulness towards her Ladyship. Say what you will (if you like not this expression) that may make her Ladyship know that I shall never let fall the memory nor the just valuation of her noble favours to me, nor leave them unrequited in my exchequer, which is the blessings of God upon my prayers. If I should write another sheet I

should be able to serve your curiosity no more of dukes, nor lords, nor courts, and this half line serves to tell you that I am truly

“Your poor friend and humble  
servant in Christ Jesus,

[*December 21, 1625.*]

“J. DONNE.”

These months of enforced seclusion in the house of the Danvers' at Chelsea, when it was not good manners even to call upon one's neighbours, may have been peculiarly happy months for Donne. He was quite well in bodily health, and he was in the company of most select and endeared friends. For Lady Danvers was none other than Donne's old patroness Magdalen Herbert, who, being left a widow in 1597, had in 1608 married Sir John Danvers, an intelligent and wealthy young man not quite half her age. The wise, tender mother of all the Herberts was probably born about 1565.<sup>1</sup> She had often been the subject of Donne's Muse. In her castle of Montgomery he had written his beautiful poem of *The Primrose*; he had addressed to her holy hymns and sonnets; above all, one of the most ingenious of his elegies, *The Autumnal*, was composed in her honour. On the authority of Walton, it has been customary to rank this poem very early among Donne's works. If we took Walton's chronology seriously, we should have to attribute *The Autumnal* at one time to 1602, at another to 1612. Neither date is possible, and Walton must have been thinking of some other poem. My own opinion, after a close examination of the evidence, is that this elegy was a work of Donne's late maturity. I feel little doubt, myself, that it was composed in the autumn of 1625, while the poet was immured in Sir John Danvers' house in Chelsea. Unless it is taken as describing the venerable and beautiful old age of a distinguished woman, the piece is an absurdity; to address such lines to a youthful widow, who was about to become the bride of a boy of twenty, would have been a monstrous breach of tact and good manners. Even in 1625

<sup>1</sup> The date commonly assigned to her birth, 1568, is unquestionably too late.

Lady Danvers could not have been more than sixty. Walton says "both he and she were then past the meridian of man's life," although he has been trying to make us believe that Donne was about thirty years of age and the lady about thirty-five. Considered as written in 1625, *The Autumnal* immediately becomes not an eccentric impertinence to a young woman, but a most delicate compliment to an old one—

"No spring, nor summer beauty hath such grace  
As I have seen in one autumnal face . . .  
If 'twere a shame to love"

(because the passion is inappropriate to the poet's years and dignity),

"here 'twere no shame,  
Affections here take Reverence's name.  
Were her first years the Golden Age? That's true,  
But now they're gold oft tried, and ever new.

Call not these wrinkles, graves; if graves they were,  
They were Love's graves, for else he is nowhere.  
Yet lies not Love dead here, but here doth sit,  
Vow'd to this trench, like an anachorit,  
And here, till hers, which must be his death, come,  
He doth not dig a grave, but build a tomb."

It is not conceivable that any man in his senses could write in this way, with a view to pleasing a still fresh and marriageable lady in the prime of life—

"Here, where still evening is, not noon, nor night;  
Where no voluptuousness, yet all delight . . .  
This is Love's timber; youth his underwood,  
There he, as wine in June, enrages blood."

It would even appear that Lady Danvers was not so slender as she once had been—

"Xerxes' strange Lydian love, the platan tree,  
Was lov'd for age, none being so large as she."

At the close of the poem he distinctly states that what he admires is the matureness of the period between the age of

fifty and the “living death’s-head” stage of extreme and senile decay. He does not admire the latter; since

“I hate extremes; yet I had rather stay  
With tombs than cradles to wear out a day.  
Since such love’s motion natural is, may still  
My love descend and journey down the hill,  
Not panting after growing beauties; so  
I shall ebb out with them who homeward go.”

This last line contains a curious premonition of Tennyson’s famous fancy. If after thus closely examining *The Autumnal* there are readers who still cling to the tradition that this poem belongs to Magdalen Herbert’s youth, I have yet another argument against that opinion. The prosody is wholly unlike that of the poet’s early years, and presents exactly the characteristics of verse which we know to belong to the last few years of his life. I think that common-sense and internal evidence alike point to the probability that *The Autumnal* was written during Donne’s sojourn with Sir John and Lady Danvers in 1625; and this is certainly an occasion on which Walton’s vague memory of what some one had told him may with advantage be neglected.

In the letter last quoted, a name illustrious in religion and poetry is mentioned, namely, that of George Herbert. He was the fifth son of Lady Danvers, and was twenty years Donne’s junior, having been born in Montgomery Castle on the 3rd of April 1593. That Donne had known him from infancy is obvious, but the great affection which sprang up between them, and lasted until the Dean’s death, probably began during the autumn of 1625. George Herbert’s youth had been spent, after Westminster, at the University of Cambridge, where he was admitted a scholar of Trinity in 1609. When Donne received his doctor’s degree at Cambridge, in such unfortunate conditions, in 1615, George Herbert was a minor fellow of Trinity College, and in 1618 he was appointed Reader in Rhetoric. In 1620 he succeeded Sir Francis Nethersole as Public Orator, “the finest place in the University,” not pecuniarily, indeed, for the income was only £30 a year, but as an introduction to court notice. George Herbert held this

office, nominally, until 1627, but politics and ambition drew him more and more of late years to court, and he delegated his duties, for months at a time, to a deputy of the name of Thorndike. It is to be noted that during this long period of service for and at Cambridge, George Herbert can have had little opportunity of becoming intimate with Donne, nor is it at all certain that there was, in those years, much in the future incumbent of Bemerton which would attract the Dean of St. Paul's.

The shock of the death of the Marquess of Hamilton, however, followed by those of King James and others well known to George Herbert, produced in the latter a great change of mind. He had been a brilliant type of the fashionable humanist, enjoying to the full "the painted pleasures of a court life," but, about the year 1625, "God inclined him to put on a resolution to serve at His altar." In this sudden alteration in the course of his projects, while the future was all in debate in his spirit, he was shut up at Chelsea, in his mother's house, in company with one of his mother's oldest friends, who happened to be the most stimulating and persuasive divine of that age. About this time, while he was preparing for orders, George Herbert was made sinecure rector of Whitford, and lay prebendary of Leighton Ecclesia, on the estate or corps of Leighton Bromswold. Although the acceptance of these little offices did not involve his necessarily entering the clerical profession, it yet showed the direction in which his thoughts were tending.

In the diary which Donne kept, he was accustomed every Christmas to "bless each year's poor remainder with a thankful prayer." That for 1625 ran thus:—

"Deo Opt. Max. benigno largitori, à me, et ab iis quibus hæc à me reservantur, Gloria et Gracia in Æternum. Amen."

Or, in English—

"To God all Good, all Great, the benevolent Bestower, by me and by them, for whom by me these sums are laid up, be glory and grace ascribed for ever. Amen."

About Christmas time the plague abated in the city of London. People ventured back to their homes, and the Dean returned to St. Dunstan's. On the 15th of January 1626 he preached on the text, "For there was not a house where there was not one dead." This is headed "the first sermon after our dispersion by the sickness." During this year he delivered at least twelve "solemn sermons to great auditories at Paul's and at court," eleven of which are to be found in various sections of his printed works. One of these, *A Sermon preached to the King's Majesty*, was immediately published in quarto, and was Donne's only contribution to the press in 1626. During this year he wrote but few letters, entirely absorbed in the labour of composing and revising the sermons for which he was now asked upon every plausible occasion. We get a faint glimpse of his domestic life from a much-damaged letter,<sup>1</sup> which may give us an occasion for reviewing the condition of Donne's family in 1626. Constance, who is mentioned here, seems to have been living unhappily with her old husband, Edward Alleyn, who was to die, unregretted, on the 25th of November. The letter points to a reconciliation between Donne and Alleyn. John, now a student of Christ Church, was resident in Oxford. George was twenty-one, and by this time probably a soldier. Lucy, Bridget, Margaret, and Elizabeth, of the ages of from eighteen to ten, divided their time between the Deanery and the house of their uncle and aunt at Peckham, Sir Nicholas and Lady Grymes.

"*To Sir NICHOLAS CAREW.*

"SIR,—Upon the many testimo[nies] I have had of your favours to myself, I am sure it ex[tends to those?] also who are derived from me. Therefore, being noti[fied of tha]t which may be had for my poor daughter, Constance, [I make th]us bold to join you with Sir Thomas Grymes in re[ceiving an] assurance from her husband. These writings [will] be ready within two or three days, and I may account that will lead you sometime to do me [favour] if you do so

<sup>1</sup> In the possession of the Rev. S. Simpson.

come. servant [ ] that you are is my excuse for this [ ] in so small a matter. Our ble[ssed] [Sa]viour [keep you and] all your family, Amen.— Your poor [friend] and servant [in Christ] Jesus,

“J. DONNE.

“At Paul's house, 26th January 1626[7].”

Early in 1626 Donne sent a copy of his *First Sermon preached to King Charles, of 1625*, to the Electress Elizabeth:—

“To the QUEEN OF BOHEMIA.<sup>1</sup>

“Though your Majesty have a large patience, yet I humbly beseech you to remember that I have not exercised it since the boldness of presenting to your Majesty that sermon, which was the first that was preached to the King, almost a year since. We read of some that have had anniversary agues, one fit a year, and no more. If my zeal to appear in your Majesty's presence push me to an anniversary importunity, and to show myself thus before you once a year, and no more, your royal goodness will be pleased to call it a modest boldness, and to say to yourself, in my behalf, surely this poor soul, who comes to me every year, in these his meditations for the public, takes me with him every morning in his private prayers and devotions to Almighty God. And when I am defective in that sacrifice, let me lose all the effect of all my other sacrifices, which I make for the happiness of your Majesties, &c.”

Elizabeth replied as follows:—

“To Dr. DONNE.

“You lay a double obligation upon me: first in praying for me, then in teaching me to pray for myself, by presenting to me your labours. The benefit likewise I hope will be double, both of your prayers and my own, and of them both to both of us; and as I am assured hereof (though it

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

hath pleased God to try me by some affliction), so I desire you to be of my thankfulness unto you, and that I will remain ready upon any good occasion to express as much as lies in the power of—Yours, &c."

At this time Donne devoted himself more than ever before to the business of preaching. It is recorded at St. Dunstan's in the West that on the 6th of May 1626 he had the pulpit removed into a more convenient position, and that at the same time two new pews were built for his personal use. To these, no doubt, his most distinguished auditors were conducted, for it had now become fashionable to sit under the famous Dean. The popularity of Donne as a preacher rose to its zenith in 1626, and remained there until his death in 1631. During those years he was, without a rival, the most illustrious and the most admired religious orator in England. Lancelot Andrewes died in September of the former year. He had enjoyed a marvellous reputation; he had been called *stella* *predicantium*. But the celebrity of Donne surpassed that of Andrewes, and was unapproached until Jeremy Taylor came. Age gave to the fiery and yet sombre Dean of St. Paul's an ever-increasing majesty of prestige. His hearers, borne along upon the flow of his sinuous melody, now soft and winning, now vehement in storm, now piercing like a clarion, now rolling in the meditative music of an organ, felt themselves lifted up to heaven itself. In these early days of Charles I. a sermon delivered by the Dean of St. Paul's was the most brilliant public entertainment which London had to offer.

Our accounts of the effect of Donne's preaching, however, mainly come down to us from the lips and pens of enthusiastic laymen. It is not so certain that his methods in the pulpit were equally appreciated, at all events at first, by his clerical brethren. The author of the *Barnabæ Itinerarium*, Richard Brathwayte, who was in the habit of listening to him, has left us some curious notes, which have been overlooked. To Brathwayte and his young friends—poets and youths of fancy—Donne seemed to be "Golden

Chrysostom come to life again," but his eloquence was less welcome to the old-fashioned "doctrine-men," the "zealous dunces" of an earlier, more humdrum school of theology. These people were even known to express their disapproval of his ravishing style of eloquence by "humming." A charge which Brathwayte tells us was brought against Donne's preaching, by those who did not admire it, was its exclusive appeal to refined and ingenious natures. It was complained that he had no message "to speak to clouted shoon," and that he used "as fine words truly as you would desire," but that he said nothing which was to practical edification. This, no doubt, was in a measure true; Donne did not address the poor of the flock, and even in the pulpit he was unconsciously an aristocrat. Brathwayte declares, positively, "it was [Donne's] fate, I know it, to be envied as much by clerics as he was magnified by laymen." To the same source we learn that Donne made it a rule to preach for exactly an hour, not more nor less—"his hour, and but an hour." The printed sermons which we possess would many of them take a great deal longer than that in delivery, and this may confirm our impression that the printed sermon by no means represented the address from the pulpit. The latter was a rhapsody, half extemporised, half learned by heart, while the written sermon was a careful composition on the same text and along the same general lines, but never identical with it in language.

Walton, who became one of his constant and enthusiastic auditors, gives us an account of his manner in the pulpit. However high the hopes of his congregation had run, Donne was able to satisfy and to exceed their expectations,<sup>1</sup> "preaching the Word so as showed his own heart was possessed with those very thoughts and joys that he laboured to distil into others: a preacher in earnest; weeping sometimes for his auditory, sometimes with them; always preaching to himself, like an angel from a cloud, but in none; carrying some, as St. Paul was, to heaven in

<sup>1</sup> Walton evidently quoted from memory very loosely; I give below the text of Chudleigh's elegy as first printed in 1635.

holy raptures, and enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives ; here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those that practised it, and a virtue so as to make it beloved even by those that loved it not ; and all this with a most particular grace and an inexpressible addition of comeliness."

Not less well known is the testimony of another habitual listener, John Chudleigh, of Ashton, who says in excellent verse which, we are assured, had all the fidelity of sober prose—

“ The altar had its fires—  
 He kept his loves, but not his objects ; wit  
 He did not banish, but transplanted it ;  
 Taught it its place and use, and brought it home  
 To piety, which it doth best beecome. . . .  
 Tell me, had ever pleasure such a dress ?  
 Have you known crimes so shaped ? or loveliness  
 Such as his lips did clothe religion in ?  
 Had not reproof a beauty passing sin ?  
 Corrupted Nature sorrow'd when she stood  
 So near the danger of becoming good.  
 And wished our so inconstant ears exempt  
 From Piety, that had such power to tempt.  
 Did not his sacred flattery beguile  
 Men to amendment ! ”

Wit it is certain that Donne did not dream of banishing from his sermons. To comprehend his charm, with the two centuries or so of his addresses before us in cold print, it is necessary to bear several things in mind. In the first place, Donne owed his extraordinary popularity in great measure to his personal magic. He hypnotised his audience by his remoteness, he spoke like “ an angel from a cloud.” He belonged to an age in which the aristocratic element exercised a domination which was apparently unquestioned. Although of middle-class birth, the temperament, manners, and society of Donne were of the most distinguished order. The religious power of democracy had not been discovered. He preached best who with the most austere isolation rose above the crowd, and remained supreme and unapproachable. The modern pastor, eager to help in the daily life of his flock, interested in the mundane affairs of humble indi-

viduals, content to subdue his pride and his taste if he can so approach closer to the wants of his congregation, was a type not yet so much as dreamed of. The Rebellion, and still more the success of the Rebellion, driving men and women of incongruous classes close to one another in the instinct of self-protection against the results of a common catastrophe, began the democratisation of the pulpit.

But of Donne we must think as untouched by a least warning of such a political upheaval. He belonged, through and through, to the old order; was, indeed, in some ways its most magnificent and minatory clerical embodiment. His personality was bold and trenchant, his intellect refined to excess. There was nothing dubious or vague about him. A human being of extreme complexity, he nevertheless contrived to give to his contemporaries that impression of a simple, integral force which intimidates and fascinates the crowd. Within, the structure might possess a myriad subtle ramifications; the varieties of its interior system might be infinite, but to the world it stood dogmatic and four-square, like one of those fortified churches, dedicated to God and to Bellona, which were just then rising on the frontiers of continental Christendom. This unity of purpose, this exaltation of a sovereign individuality, made to command in any sphere, yet flung like a coronet at the feet of the Church, gave to the sermons of Donne their extraordinary vital power; and if this particular charm has evaporated, if we can no longer, in reading them, thrill with emotion as Donne's congregation did, it is that the elements in ourselves are lacking, that we no longer breathe the aristocratic Jacobean atmosphere.

Donne went slowly forward with his prebend sermons "upon my five Psalms." It is evident that he gave unusual labour to those compositions; the second was preached at St. Paul's on the 29th of January, the third on the 5th of November 1626. Just as the year was passing out, one of his notable parishioners died, Alderman Sir William Cokayne (or Cokain), a merchant of great consequence, reputed to be one of the richest men in England. Lady Cokayne's father, Richard Morris, had

preceded Donne's father as Master of the Ironmongers' Company, and she had been born, like the poet, in 1573. The funeral sermon on Sir William Cokayne, which Donne preached on the 12th of December 1626, gives evidence of acquaintance, if not of intimate friendship, with the deceased, and offers this handsome, and somewhat surprising, compliment to Sir William's merits:—

“I have sometimes heard the greatest master of language and judgment, which these times, or any other, did or do or shall give (that great and good King of ours), say of him, that he never heard any man of his breeding handle business more rationally, more pertinently, more elegantly, more persuasively; and when his purpose was to do a grace to a preacher of very good abilities and good note in his own chapel, I have heard [the King] say that his language and accent and manner of delivering himself was like [Sir William Cokayne's]. . . . I must not defraud him of this testimony from myself, that into this place where we are now met, I have observed him to enter with much reverence, and compose himself in this place with much declaration of devotion.”

In the course of the sermon, Donne mentions the interesting fact that the Aldermen of the City had been lately admitted by the Dean and Chapter to seats in the choir of St. Paul's, a distinction which seems to have gratified those “honourable and worshipful” persons. From this it appears that until that date the choir had, as in Catholic times, been reserved for the clergy.

Autobiographical touches are not frequent in the sermons of Donne, but one passage in that on the funeral of Sir William Cokayne has considerable interest of this kind. As the Dean advanced in years, the quickness of his spiritual perception increased. He observed his own nature, probed it, listened to the hidden sounds and subterranean movements of it. Here he takes us into his confidence as to the difficulty he found in concentrating his thoughts upon pure devotion:—

“I throw myself down in my chamber, and I call in and invite God and His angels thither; and when they are

there, I neglect God and His angels for the noise of a fly, for the rattling of a coach, for the whining of a door ; I talk on, in the same posture of prayer ; eyes lifted up, knees bowed down, as though I prayed to God ; and if God should ask me when I thought last of God in that prayer I cannot tell : sometimes I find that I forgot what I was about, but when I began to forget it, I cannot tell. A memory of yesterday's pleasures, a fear of to-morrow's dangers, a straw under my knee, a noise in mine ear, a chimera in my brain, troubles me in my prayer."

In the Second Prebend Sermon, he speaks of the trivial character of physical pain, which "is but a caterpillar got into one corner of my garden, a mildew fallen upon one acre of my corn." Further on, he protests : "I would not keep company with a man that thought me a knave, or a traitor ; with him that thought I loved not my Prince, or was a faithless man, not to be believed." This Second Prebend Sermon, which is a long poem of victory over death, is one of the most magnificent pieces of religious writing in English literature, and closes with a majestic sentence of incomparable pomp and melody, which might be selected as typical of Jacobean, or rather early Stuart, prose in its most gorgeous and imperial order. The preacher perorates thus :—

"As my soul shall not go towards heaven, but go by heaven to heaven, to the heaven of heavens, so the true joy of a good soul in this world is the very joy of heaven ; and we go thither, not that being without joy, we might have joy infused into us, but that, as Christ says, *Our joy might be full*, perfected, sealed with an everlastingness ; for, as He promises, *That no man shall take our joy from us*, so neither shall death itself take it away, nor so much as interrupt it, or discontinue it, but as in the face of death, when he lays hold upon me, and in the face of the devil, when he attempts me, I shall see the face of God (for everything shall be a glass, to reflect God upon me), so in the agonies of death, in the anguish of that dissolution, in the sorrows of that valediction, in the irreversibleness of that transmigration, I shall have a joy, which shall no more

evaporate, than my soul shall evaporate, a joy, that shall pass up, and put on a more glorious garment above, and be joy superinvested in glory. Amen."

At the close of 1626, Donne made this entry in his Diary :—

"This year God hath blessed me and mine with *multiplicatæ sunt super nos misericordiæ tuæ.*"

The year 1627 opened very uncomfortably for Donne. He had no disposition for controversy, and old age had brought with it a certain timidity, an unwillingness to be mixed up in adventurous or risky contentions. The cleric who at this moment was altogether in the ascendant was the too-famous Dr. William Laud, a man born in the same year as Donne, but of infinitely greater physical vitality and social audacity. Laud, having trampled down all opposition, had since 1626 been Bishop of Bath and Wells, Dean of the Royal Chapel, and a powerful scourge of the rising party of Puritans. Laud could have no just suspicion of Donne, who was as "orthodox," in the High Church sense, as he was himself, but he was jealous of his popularity, and he seems to have begun early in the year to spy upon the Dean of St. Paul's. The "B." of the following uneasy note is plainly George Montaigne (1569-1628), Bishop of London. He was an ardent ally and almost creature of Laud, whom he supported upon every occasion with a sort of passive obedience. He was a lazy, grasping man, little concerned with ecclesiastical principles, but ready to do whatever the stirring Bishop of Bath and Wells told him to do. Charles I. presently, as the joke ran, flung this "Mountain" into the archiepiscopal "sea" of York to make room for Laud in London. The present Bishop of London suggests to me that Laud, who was a precisian, was scandalised by Donne's profane MSS. writings. Otherwise, it is strange that Laud should have suspected Donne, who was doubtless perfectly ready to subscribe to all that was laid down in Richard Montagu's *Appello Cæsarem*, and who assented to that idea of Church government which has been thus defined by Professor S. R. Gardiner, as fulfilling the dream of Laud and his companions :—

“ It was the idea of a system controlled by a minority of learned men without any consideration for the feelings and prejudices either of their learned antagonists or of the ignorant multitude, but looking with fondness upon the Royal authority, which was alone able to give them the strength which they lacked.”

In this letter there is some uneasiness, but at present no definite alarm :—

“ *To the Honourable Knight Sir ROBERT KER, at Court.*<sup>1</sup>

“ SIR,—I have obeyed the forms of our Church of Paul's so much, as to have been a solemn Christmas man, and tried conclusions upon myself, how I could sit out the siege of new faces, every dinner. So that I have not seen the B[ishop] in some weeks. And I know not whether he be in case, to afford that privacy which you justly desire. This day I am in my bondage of entertaining. Suppers, I presume, are inconvenient to you. But this evening I will spy upon the B[ishop] and give you an account to-morrow morning of his disposition ; when, if he cannot be entire to you, since you are gone so far downwards in your favours to me, be pleased to pursue your humiliation so far as to choose your day, and either to suffer the solitude of this place, or to change it, by such company as shall wait upon you, and come as a visitor and overseer of this hospital of mine, and dine or sup at this miserable chezmey.—Your humblest and thankfullest servant,

“ J. DONNE.

“ 4th Jannary 1626 [7.]”

Five days later Donne's eldest surviving unmarried daughter, Lucy, was buried at Camberwell. She was in her nineteenth year, and her place at the head of the Deancery household was taken by Bridget, who was just seventeen.

We have seen that Donne introduced, as we may think somewhat awkwardly, an almost servile eulogy of Charles I. into his sermon on Sir W. Cokayne. He offered no

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

opposition whatever to the King's growing predominance in the State, and had arrived, in company with the rest of the High Church party, at a condition of subserviency to the Royal wishes which would have filled his proud recusant ancestors with horror. Yet, strangely enough, this was the moment at which Donne saw for once the favour of Charles I. obscured from him, as once that of James I. had been.<sup>1</sup> The ecclesiastic position, out of which the incident described in the ensuing letters arose, may be detailed as follows:—

Dr. Richard Montague (1577–1641), soon afterwards Bishop of Chichester and ultimately of Norwich, was a very active and argumentative divine. He was one of those High Church scholars who eagerly set themselves “to stand in the gap against Puritanism and Popery,” that Scylla and Charybdis of the age. For six or seven years past, Montague had made himself incessantly prominent in urging upon the conscience of churchmen the reasons which should lead the Anglican Church to eschew the doctrines of Rome on the one side and of Geneva on the other. Hence he was highly favoured by the Laudian party, and with equal vehemence denounced by Romanists and Puritans; taking this stand, Montague combined with it extreme views with regard to the divine right of the King. In 1625 he answered his opponents in a work entitled *Appello Cæsarem*, which Archbishop Abbot refused to license. The author, however, managed to push it through the press, under the sanction of Dr. White, Dean of Carlisle. This tractate awakened an unparalleled sensation, and was circulated like wildfire. Abbot stirred up an attack upon the *Appello* in Parliament, but Montague was defended covertly by Charles I., and openly by Laud, Andrews, and Montaigne. A committee was appointed to examine his opinions, and on the 11th of February 1626 a conference was held in Buckingham House for a discussion of Montague's position; it sat for two days, “many of the nobility being present.” The result, in spite of an able defence by White,

<sup>1</sup> These two incidents of 1624 and 1627 have been strangely confounded with one another by some of Donne's biographers. The second is not alluded to by Walton.

was that the committee persisted in censuring the *Appello*, and the House of Commons ordered it to be burned and the author properly punished.

A week or two later, Abbot again put himself in opposition to Laud and the Royal party, by refusing to license for the press the violent sermon preached by Sibthorpe before the judges of assizes at Northampton on the 22nd of February. Abbot was to find that it was easier when he was young to oppose James I. than now he was old to check Charles I., that to browbeat Rehoboam was beyond his power. He rapidly fell into disgrace. Meanwhile, the King, bent upon positive subjection to his will, took no heed of any signals of popular exasperation, but was extremely suspicious and testy, and ready to discover offence on every hand. He quashed the verdict against the *Appello Cæsarem*, and instead of punishing Montague, he made him Bishop of Chichester on the 14th of July 1628. Donne, as we have seen, had never been on intimate terms with Abbot, but Morton, now Bishop of Lichfield, who was held to be a main offender, was the earliest and had been the closest of all Donne's clerical friends. On the 1st of April 1627 Donne was appointed to preach before the King at Whitehall, and Laud was among the auditors. It appears that Archbishop Abbot had just preached a sermon of a very Low Church character, which had offended the King, and that Charles I. and Laud, putting their heads together after Donne's sermon, had come to the conclusion that the Dean of St. Paul's was preparing to support the Archbishop. The sermon, in its existing state, does not bear out this theory, and, as a matter of fact, Donne had not heard of Abbot's sermon. He was therefore very much startled to receive a letter from Laud commanding him to send the King a copy of his own sermon. In his alarm he laid the matter in the hands of his judicious friend, Sir Robert Ker:—

“To the Right Honourable Sir ROBERT KER.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—A few hours after I had the honour of your letter, I had another from my Lord of Bath and Wells,

<sup>1</sup> From *Letters of 1651*.

commanding from the King a copy of my sermon. I am in preparations of that, with diligence, yet this morning I waited upon his Lordship, and laid up in him this truth, that of the Bishop of Canterbury's sermon, to this hour, I never heard syllable, nor what way, nor upon what points he went. And for mine, it was put into that very order, in which I delivered it, more than two months since. Freely to you I say, I would I were a little more guilty: only mine innocence makes me afraid. I hoped for the King's approbation heretofore in many of my sermons; and I have had it. But yesterday I came very near looking for thanks; for, in my life, I was never in any one piece so studious of his service. Therefore, exceptions being taken, and displeasure kindled at this, I am afraid, it was rather brought thither than met there. If you know any more fit for me (because I hold that unfit for me, to appear in my master's sight, as long as this cloud hangs, and therefore, this day forbear my ordinary waitings), I beseech you to intimate it to your very humble and very thankful servant,

“J. DONNE.”

[April 2, 1627.]

“To the Right Honourable Sir ROBERT KER, at Court.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I was this morning at your door, somewhat early; and I am put into such a distaste of my last sermon, as that I dare not practice any part of it, and therefore, though I said then that we are bound to speak aloud, though we awaken men, and make them froward, yet after two or three modest knocks at the door, I went away. Yet I understood after, the King was gone abroad, and thought you might be gone with him. I came to give you an account of that, which this does as well.

“I have now put into my Lord of Bath and Wells' hands the sermon faithfully exscrcibed [*sic*]. I beseech you be pleased to hearken farther after it; I am still upon my jealousy, that the King brought thither some disaffection towards me, grounded upon some other demerit of mine,

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

and took it not from the sermon. For, as Cardinal Cusanus wrote a book, *Cibratio Alchorani*, I have cibrated, and re-cibrated, and post-cibrated the sermon, and must necessarily say, the King, who hath let fall his eye upon some of my poems, never saw, of mine, a hand, or an eye, or an affection set down with so much study, and diligence, and labour of syllables, as in this sermon I expressed those two points, which I take so much to conduce to his service, the imprinting of persuasibility and obedience in the subject, and the breaking of the bed of whisperers, by casting in a bone, of making them suspect and distrust one another.

“I remember I heard the old King say of a good sermon, that he thought the preacher never had thought of his sermon till he spoke it; it seemed to him negligently and extemporally spoken. And I knew that he had weighed every syllable for half a year before, which made me conclude that the King had before some prejudice upon him. So, the best of my hope is, that some over bold allusions, or expressions in the way, might divert his Majesty from vouchsafing to observe the frame and purpose of the sermon.

“When he sees the general scope, I hope his goodness will pardon collateral escapes. I entreated the Bishop to ask his Majesty, whether his displeasure extended so far as that I should forbear waiting and appearing in his presence; and I had a return, that I might come. Till I had that, I would not offer to put myself under your roof. To-day I come, for that purpose, to say prayers. And if, in any degree, my health suffer it, I shall do so to-morrow. If anything fall into your observation before that (because the Bishop is likely to speak to the King of it, perchance this night), if it amount to such an increase of displeasure, as that it might be unfit for me to appear, I beseech you afford me the knowledge. Otherwise, I am likely to inquire of you personally to-morrow before nine in the morning, and to put into your presence then

“Your very humble and very true and very honest

“servant to God and the King and you,

“J. DONNE.

“I wrote yesterday to my Lord Duke, by my Lord Carlisle, who assured me of a gracious acceptation of my putting myself in his protection.”

The British Museum possesses a copy of the 1635 edition of Donne's poems which belonged to Charles I., and in which there are a few marks supposed to have been made by him; it is shown by the preceding letter that the King had read the poems in MS. With the intervention of Buckingham and Carlisle the incident closed. It is difficult to understand the action of Laud, although the method is characteristic enough. But it is possible that personal pique had something to do with his onslaught upon the Dean of St. Paul's, for it was in the courtyard of Donne's house that the mysterious paper was picked up, containing the words, “Laud, look to thyself; be assured thy life is sought. As thou art the fountain of all wickedness, repent thee of thy monstrous sins before thou art taken out of the world.” But that Donne was innocent of such silly mystifications as this must have been patent even to Laud. The incident closes on a peaceful note:—

“*To the Right Honourable Sir ROBERT KER, at Court.*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I humbly thank you for this continuing me in your memory, and enlarging me so far as to the memory of my sovereign, and (I hope) my master. My tenets are always for the preservation of the religion I was born in, and the peace of the State, and the rectifying of the conscience. In these I shall walk, and as I have from you a new seal thereof in this letter, so I had ever evidence in mine own observation that these ways were truly, as they are justly, acceptable in his Majesty's ear. Our blessed Saviour multiply unto him all blessings. Amen.—Your very true and entire servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.”

[*April 1627.*]

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

The words here, "the religion I was born in," are very startling, and at first sight incomprehensible. Everybody knew that Donne had been born and bred a Romanist, and that his family were stringent recusants. His aged mother—who now lived, not without some scandal, in the Deanery itself—was a persistent Papist. But I think that Donne, as a staunch High Churchman, would not admit any essential difference between the Catholic religion in which he was born, and that which he now professed. He would say that if there had been secession, it was the Romans who had changed their religion, and not he. It would be quite in keeping with the views of Laud and of his party to persist in declaring that it was in the Church of England, and in no other, that a man like Donne had been born. If, as Dr. James Gairdner has said, "Rome was no longer competent to be the guardian either of faith or morals," the Catholic religion, in England as in Italy, was none the less one and indivisible.

Donne may possibly have met with the poems of his French contemporary, Agrippa d'Aubigné, a vehement Huguenot with whom the Dean of St. Paul's had not a little in common. If so, his attention would no doubt be caught by that adorable verse of Aubigné's—

"Une rose d'automne est plus qu'une autre exquise."

Donne's own autumnal rose was not destined to grow on into the winter of old age. The health of Lady Danvers had for some time been giving disquietude to those around her, and in May 1627 George Herbert was summoned to Chelsea from overseeing the rebuilding of his church at Leighton Bromswold. His mother died in the first days of June, and on the 8th was buried in Chelsea church. Donne had undertaken to preach her funeral sermon, but he was unable to do so, being "bound by pre-obligations and pre-contracts to his own profession"; but it was only postponed until the 1st of July. This address was promptly published in quarto, under the title, *A Sermon of Commemoration of the Lady Danvers*, and there were printed at the end of it the Paren-

*talia* of George Herbert, consisting of nineteen poems, in Latin and Greek, dedicated to the memory of his mother. At the death of his saintly wife, or even perhaps before it, Sir John Danvers seems to have fallen into distressed circumstances. Donne was not neglectful of what he owed to this generous friend, and we find that twice he came forward to relieve him in times of embarrassment, once with a loan of £200, and again with one of a hundred marks. In 1630 Sir John Danvers had not yet paid back this debt. Donne left it to his son George, with a request that Sir John would pay an annuity of forty pounds until the whole was refunded. That Donne had complete confidence in the honour and competency of Danvers is shown by the fact that the debt was counted as part of George's equal portion of the patrimony. Sir John Danvers was to choose a picture—not otherwise bequeathed—from the gallery at the Deanery.

Within one week Donne lost two of his most revered and valued friends, for on the 31st of May died at Moor Park, worn out by long-drawn fatigue and disease, Lucy, Countess of Bedford. She had scarcely survived her invalid husband, Edward, the third Russell Earl. As they had no children, the title passed to Francis Russell, a cousin. On the day after the Earl's death, Thomas Meautys had reported that "my Lady's strength and spirits are far spent, and she is wearing out daily by an untoward cough which is almost continual." In fact, she lived but four weeks more; she was buried at Exton, beside her brother, John Harington, and this was the end of the gracious "Favourite of the Muses."

All Donne's ancient friends seemed to be leaving him at once. Ever since the beginning of 1626 Sir Henry Goodyer had been failing in health; on the 18th of March 1628 he passed away at Polesworth, leaving three daughters to share his diminished revenues, and the rectory and manor of Polesworth. Sir Henry's only son, John, had died childless on the 18th of December 1624; Lucy, with a substantial dowry from the Countess of Bedford, had married Sir Francis Nethersole. Sir Henry Goodyer,

who had always been extravagant in display and something of an adventurer, fell into abject poverty in his old age. In February 1626 he wrote to Mr. Secretary Conway that he was "so consumed in estate" that he was "scarce able to put meat into his daughters' mouths." There can be little doubt that Goodyer is the friend to whom Walton tells us that Donne made a gift of £100, happy to be able to help one "whom he had known live plentifully, and by a too liberal heart and carelessness become decayed in his estate." We must not forget that to Sir Henry Goodyer we owe, more than to any other person, our knowledge of the middle years of Donne's life.

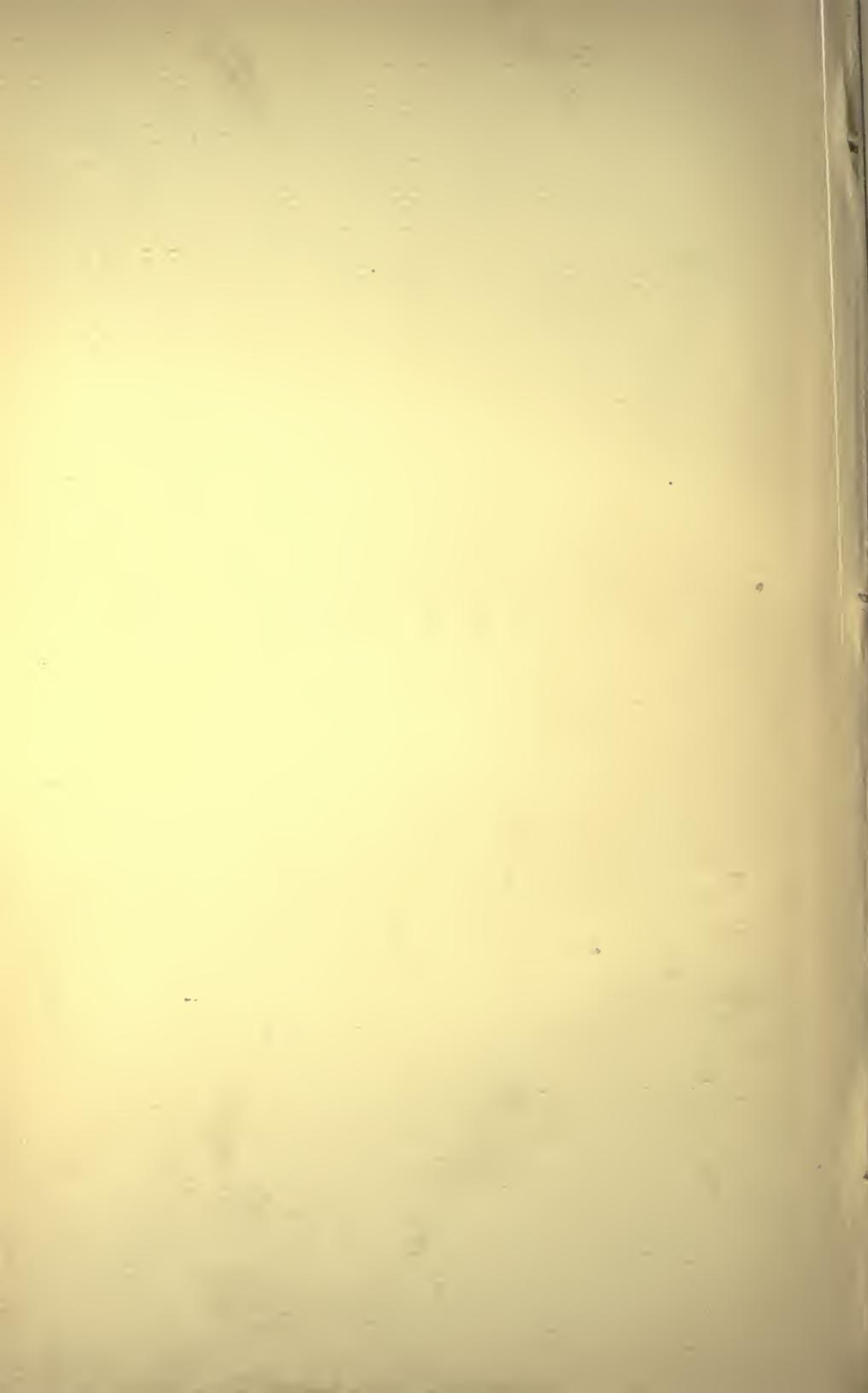
Yet another ancient friend passed away in 1628, the ardent and accessible Christopher Brooke, who had aided Donne, to his own hurt, in the escapade of his marriage. He had been identified with many poets, of whom Donne took no heed—with Browne, and Wither, and Davies of Hereford. He was the "Cuttie" of the pleasant pastoral coterie, and had set forth to "accomplish high designs," as the author of *Britannia's Pastorals* had declared. Christopher Brooke, as I have remarked elsewhere, is, among the Jacobean poets, the figure which every "set" supplies, the man in whom contemporary eyes detect endless promise of genius, and in whom posterity can scarcely see anything to arrest attention. His younger brother, Samuel Brooke, who married Donne to Ann More, became Master of Trinity. In 1630 Donne pleasantly mentions him as "mine ancient friend." He lived on until 1632.

The subsequent career of Sir John Danvers was prolonged for a quarter of a century after the death of his first wife. He did not long remain a widower, having married Elizabeth Dauntsey on the 10th of July 1628. A curious element of eccentricity, which had not shown itself in the days of Magdalen Herbert, now began to develop in him. The new Lady Danvers inherited money, and her husband grew as extravagant as he had lately been penurious. His vanity was subjected to some rebuffs at court, and he became disaffected. In 1640, Sir John Danvers went openly over to the Roundheads, and did all in his power to embarrass

the king. Cromwell, as Clarendon tells us, "employed and yet contemned him." He rose, however, to prominence in the Parliamentary party, and it would have filled Donne with indignation if his "divining heart" could have foreseen that his old friend would come to be one of the actual Regicides. Sir John Danvers, in fact, signed the king's death-warrant in 1649. He died in his house in Chelsea in April 1655.

LAST YEARS

1628-1631



## CHAPTER XV

### LAST YEARS

1628-1631

As Donne's friends passed away, he was not left so solitary as we might suppose, for his eminently social nature, which seemed to grow sweeter instead of sourer with the advance of years, attracted fresh kindred spirits to him. Among these Bryan Dupp<sup>a</sup> was one. Fifteen years Donne's junior, he resembled him in the variety and exoticism of his tastes, and in the peculiarity that, having wandered long on the Continent, and particularly in Spain, and having thought of any profession rather than the Church, he was suddenly induced to enter Holy Orders so late as 1625, when he became the Earl of Dorset's chaplain. We may conjecture that it was during one of Donne's frequent visits to Knolle that the friendship began. Dupp<sup>a</sup> had a taste for Spanish things; he was a much-travelled man, in whose company Donne would delight. In 1629, through his patron's influence, and at Buckingham's recommendation, Dupp<sup>a</sup> was appointed to the Deanery of Christ Church, and after Donne's death he rose to great honour in the Church, being successively Bishop of Chichester, Salisbury, and Winchester, and living on to share in the glories of the Restoration.

A far more prominent position among the friends of Donne is held by the immortal piscatory linen-draper, Izaak Walton. Of the youth of this delightful man the most careful researches have revealed but little. He lacked himself to be his own garrulous biographer. Izaak Walton was born at Stafford, on the 9th of August 1593, and was therefore twenty years younger than Donne. He came up

early to London, as an apprentice. In 1618 he was made free of the Ironmongers' Company, of which Donne's father had long before been Master. In 1624 he took a linen-draper's shop two doors up Fleet Street, west of Chancery Lane. Here he was living when Donne came to St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, and for the remainder of the Dean's life Walton seems to have studied him closely. How he came to possess Donne's personal acquaintance is unknown. It was not Donne who married him to Rachel Floud in 1626. The mere fact of Walton's being a parishioner would be, in those days, quite inadequate to explain the intimacy of a tradesman with a man of Donne's social exclusiveness. We can well understand that when once Donne had come into the circle of Walton's charm of conversation and innocent, brilliant hero-worship, he would not escape from it, but how he was persuaded to enter we shall perhaps never know. Some one, in all probability, took Walton to the Deanery on one of those Saturdays which Donne dedicated to repose and the visits of his friends. According to Walton: "The latter part of his life may be said to have been a continued study; for as he usually preached once a week, if not oftener, so after his sermon he never gave his eyes rest till he had chosen out a new text, and that night cast his sermon into a form, and his text into divisions; and the next day betook himself to consult the Fathers and so commit his meditations to his memory, which was excellent. But upon Saturday he usually gave himself and his mind a rest from the weary burden of his week's meditations, and usually spent that day in visitation of friends, or some other diversions of his thoughts, and would say that he gave both his body and mind that refreshment that he might be enabled to do the work of the day following, not faintly, but with courage and cheerfulness."

An undated letter, evidently belonging to this period of Donne's life, may here be given as a commentary on Walton's words. In "F." I suspect a misprint for "G.," and that the note was addressed to George Herbert:—

“To my worthy friend F. H.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I can scarce do any more this week than send you word why I writ not last. I had then seposed a few days for my preparation to the Communion of our Blessed Saviour’s body, and in that solitariness and arraignment of myself, digested some meditations of mine, and apparelled them (as I use) in the form of a sermon; for since I have not yet utterly delivered myself from this intemperance of scribbling (though I thank God my accesses are less and less vehement), I make account that to spend all my little stock of knowledge upon matter of delight were the same error as to spend a fortune upon masques and banqueting houses; I chose rather to build in this poor fashion some spittles and hospitals, where the poor and impotent sinner may find some relief, or at least understanding of his infirmity. And if they be too weak to serve posterity, yet for the present by contemplation of them, &c.”

Almost our only source of information as to Donne’s life in 1628 is the precious group of letters written with quite unusual warmth and absence of reserve to Mrs. Cokain. The family of this lady’s husband, the eccentric Thomas Cokain of Ashbourne, was connected with Polesworth, and Donne’s acquaintance with Mrs. Cokain, who had been deserted by her husband, and was living at Ashbourne alone with her young children, had probably been due to Sir Henry Goodyer. One of the lady’s sons, afterward Sir Aston Cokain, and known as the author of *The Obstinate Lady* and other dramas, was now twenty years of age and a law-student. Mrs. Cokain had been Ann, daughter of Sir John Stanhope of Elvaston, in Derbyshire. Thomas Cokain married her about 1607, and she bore him seven children. He seems to have been crazy; he abruptly abandoned her, and came up to London, where he disappeared; in process of time she discovered that he was living in lodgings under the assumed name of Brown, and was engaged in composing an English-Greek lexicon.

<sup>1</sup> Letters of 1651.

He lived on, a constant scourge to his family, whom he terrified by sudden apparitions, until 1638, and mystification pursued him after his decease, for no one has ever quite decided whether his much-talked-of lexicon did or did not exist. This Thomas Cokain was the head of the family of which the wealthy Sir William Cokain (or Cokayne), who had been a parishioner of Donne's, was a collateral representative.

The date of the first of these letters is indicated by the fact that Sir John Brook married Frances Bamfylde on the 16th of May 1628.

“ *To Mrs. COKAIN.*<sup>1</sup>

“ **MY NOBLEST SISTER**,—In your letter from Bath, you told me particularly how I might return an answer, that I presume you intended it for a commandment that I should do so. Therefore I write, though not therefore only, for though my obedience be a good reason, yet I have another of higher value, that is, my love; of which love of mine to you, one principal act having always been my prayers for you. At this time I knew not how to express that love that way, because not knowing what seasons of weather are best for your use of the Bath, I know not what weather to pray for. I determine my prayers therefore in those generals, that God will give you whatsoever you would have, and multiply it to you when you have it. If I might have forborn this letter till to-morrow, I could have had time enough to enlarge myself, for Saturday is my day of conversation and liberty. But I am now upon Friday evening, and not got through my preparation for my Paul's service upon Sunday. If you look for news from hence, let my part (who knows but small things) be this: That Sir John Brook is married to Sir William Bam.'s third daughter. So, my noble sister, our most blessed Saviour bless you with His best blessings, here and hereafter. Amen.—Your very true friend, and brother, and servant,

“ *J. DONNE.*”

[*May 1628.*]

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

In the next letter, we find Dr. Simeon Foxe first mentioned. He was the most eminent physician of the day. Born in 1568, he had gradually risen to the very height of his profession. He lived close to the Deanery, in the College House at Amen Corner, Paternoster Lane. It appears that "Pegge," or Margaret, Donne recovered from her attack of smallpox, for in 1633 she married Sir William Bowles of Clerkenwell. She was in her thirtieth year when this letter was written. Of all Donne's children, Peggy, Lady Bowles, survived him the longest, living until October 3, 1679.<sup>1</sup> The Bedfordshire allusion in this letter is, of course, to Blunham. A "squinancie" was the disease which we now call quinsy, a severe tonsillitis with suppuration. The "fever" would be the indication of the onset of the malady, which later on developed into quinsy:—

"*To Mrs. COKAIN.*"<sup>2</sup>

"**M**Y NOBLEST AND LOVINGEST SISTER,—Nothing returns oftener with more comfort to my memory, than that you nor I ever asked anything of one another which we might not safely grant, and we can ask nothing safely that implies an offence to God, or injury to any other person. I fall upon this consideration now, upon this occasion. Your letter, upon the two-and-twentieth of August, which I received this day, lays a commandment upon me to give you an account of my state in health. You do but ask me how I do; and if your letter had come yesterday, I could not have told you that. At my return from Kent to my gate, I found Pegge had the pox, so I withdrew to Peckham, and spent a fortnight there. And without coming home, when I could with some justice hope that it would spread no farther amongst them (as I humbly thank God it hath not, nor much disfigured her that had it), I went into Bedfordshire. There, upon my third Sunday, I was seized with a fever, which grew so upon me, as forced me to a resolution of seeking my physician at London. Thither I came in a day, and a little piece; and within four miles of

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F.

<sup>2</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

home I was surprised with an accident in the coach, which never befel me before, nor had been much in my contemplation, and therefore affected me much. It was a violent falling of the uvula, which when Doctor Foxe (whom I found at London, and who had not been there in ten days before) considered well, and perceived the fever complicated with a squinancie: by way of prevention of both, he presently took blood; and so with ten days' starving in a close prison, that is, my bed, I am (blessed be God) returned to a convenient temper, and pulse, and appetite, and learn to eat, and this day met the acceptablest guest in the acceptablest manner, your letter, walking in my chamber. All which I tell you with these particularities, lest my sickness might be presented by rumour worse than God hath been pleased to make it; for, I humbly thank Him, now I feel no present ill, nor have reason to fear worse. If I understand your letter aright, much of your family is together. If it be so, entreat them, for your sake, to receive my service, which, by your hand, I present to them all. If they be otherwise severed, yet, in the ears of Almighty God, to whom, I know, they all daily pray, my daily prayers for them all shall also meet them all; and that's the only service which I can promise myself an ability to do to God's Church now, since this infirmity in my mouth and voice is likely to take me from any frequent exercise of my other duty of preaching. But God will either enable me, or pardon me. His will be done upon us all, as His goodness hath been over-flowingly poured out upon your poor friend and lovingest brother and servant,

J. DONNE."

[*August 24, 1628.*]

He does not seem to have regained strength, and at Dr. Foxe's command he withdrew for some months from his clerical work and from London itself. All that seemed to ail him was a persistent debility, such as, at his age, would be sure to follow a severe attack of quinsy. The fact was that his vital forces, so long undermined, were failing at last. So quietly did he vegetate, esconced somewhere in the country, that the rumour of his death was general. He

writes at this time an interesting letter to his friend, Mrs. Cokain:—

“ *To Mrs. COKAIN.*<sup>1</sup>

“ **MY NOBLE SISTER**,—Though my man, at London, might have made such a return to your man’s letter from himself, as might have given satisfaction enough, yet, because there were so many hours between his receipt of that letter and the return of the carrier as might admit that delay, he thought best to acquaint me with it. I am not sorry he did so, for I have found this rumour of my death to have made so deep impressions, and to have been so peremptorily believed, that from very remote parts I have been entreated to signify, under my hand, that I am yet alive. If you have believed the report, and mourned for me, I pray let that that is done already serve at the time that it shall be true. To mourn a second time were to suspect that I were fallen into the second death, from which I have abundant assurance in the application of the superabundant merits of my Saviour.

“ What gave the occasion of this rumour, I can make no conjecture. And yet the hour of my death, and the day of my burial, were related in the highest place of this kingdom. I had at that time no kind of sickness, nor otherwise than I had been ever since my fever, and am yet—that is, too weak at this time of the year to go forth, especially to London, where the sickness is near my house, and where I must necessarily open myself to more business than my present state would bear. Yet, next term, by God’s grace, I will be there; at which time, I have understood from my Lord Carlisle’s house, that the Dean of Exeter<sup>2</sup> will be there, which hath made me forbear to write, because I know how faintly and lamely businesses go on by letters, in respect of conferences. In the meantime, my prayers for your happiness shall fill all the time of your true friend, and brother, and servant,

“ **J. DONNE.**”

[November (?) 1628.]

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Matthew Sutcliffe, who died some eight months later.

On Christmas Day, 1628, however, Donne preached again at St. Paul's, and from this time forth for several months resumed his London duties. The next letter refers to the death of Mrs. Cokain's son Thomas, who died at Bath in his eighteenth year. He had been born on the 1st of January 1612,<sup>1</sup> so that the letter must belong to the year 1629. It is the only example of Donne's correspondence for that year which we possess. The references to his sons, John and George, dedicated to the Church and the Army, may arrest our attention. We should, but for the former reference, and one in a later letter, not have known that John Donne, junior, was destined for the Church, since he does not appear to have been ordained until long after his father's death.

*“To Mrs. COKAIN.<sup>2</sup>*

“MY NOBLE AND VIRTUOUS SISTER,—If I had had such an occasion as this to have written to you, in the first year of our acquaintance, I had been likely to have presented you with an essay of moral comfort. Now, my letter may be well excused, if it amount to an homily. My profession and my willingness, to stay long upon so good an office as to assist you, will bear it. Our souls are truly said to be in every part of our bodies; but yet, if any part of the body be cut off, no part of the soul perishes, but is sucked into that soul that remains, in that that remains of the body. When any limb or branch of a family is taken away, the virtue, the love, and (for the most part) the patrimony and fortune of him that is gone, remains with the family. The family would not think itself the less, if any little quillet of ground had been evicted from it; nor must it, because a clod of earth, one person of the family, is removed. In these cases there is nothing lost; one part, the soul, enjoys a present gain; and the other, the body, expects a future. We think it good husbandry to place our children's portions so, as that in so many years it may multiply to so much: shall we not

<sup>1</sup> Parish Registers of Ashbourne.

<sup>2</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

be as glad to lay their bodies there, where only they can be mellowed and ripened for glorification.

“The perverseness of the father put you to such a necessity of hiding your sons, so that this son is scarce more out of your sight, by being laid underground, than he was before. And perchance you have been longer time, at some times, from meeting and seeing one another in this world than you shall be now from meeting in the glory of the resurrection. That may come sooner than you looked he should come from the Bath. A man truly liberal, or truly charitable, will borrow money to lend; for, if I be bound to assist another with my meat, or with my money, I may be as much bound to assist him with my credit, and borrow to lend. We do but borrow children of God, to lend them to the world. And when I lend the world a daughter in marriage, or lend the world a son in a profession, the world does not always pay me well again; my hopes are not always answered in that daughter or that son. But, of all that I lend to, the grave is my best paymaster. The grave shall restore me my child, where he and I shall have but one Father, and pay me my earth, when that earth shall be amber, a sweet perfume, in the nostrils of his and my Saviour.

“Since I am well content to send one son to the Church, the other to the Wars, why should I be loth to send one part of either son to heaven and the other to the earth? Comfort yourself in this, my noble sister, that for those years he lived you were answerable to God for him; for yet, he was so young as a mother’s power might govern him; and so long he was under your charge, and you accountable for him. Now, when he was growing into those years as needed a stronger hand—a father’s care—and had not that, God hath cancelled your bonds, discharged you, and undertakes the office of a Father Himself. But, above all, comfort yourself in this, that it is the declared will of God. In sicknesses, and other worldly crosses, there are anxieties and perplexities; we wish one thing to-day, in the behalf of a

distressed child or friend, and another to-morrow; because God hath not yet declared His will. But when he hath done that, in death, there is no room for any anxiety, for any perplexity, no, not for a wish; for we may not so much as pray for the dead.

“You know, David made his child’s sickness his Lent, but his death his Easter; he fasted till the child’s death, but then he returned to his repast, because then he had a declaration of God’s will. I am far from quenching in you, or discharging natural affections; but, I know your easy apprehensions and over-tenderness in this kind. And I know some persons in the world that I wish may live, especially for this respect, because I know their death would over-affect you. In so noble and numerous a family as yours is, every year must necessarily present you some such occasion of sorrow, in the loss of some near friend. And therefore I, in the office of a friend, and a brother, and a priest of God, do not only look that you should take this patiently as a declaration of God’s present will, but that you take it catechistically, as an instruction for the future; and that God, in this, tells you that He will do so again in some other [of] your friends. For, to take any one cross patiently, is but to forgive God for once; but, to surrender one’s self entirely to God, is to be ready for all that He shall be pleased to do. And, that His pleasure may be either to lessen your crosses, or multiply your strength, shall be the prayer of your brother, and friend, and servant, and chaplain,

JOHN DONNE.”

As far as can be perceived, Donne preached with his usual assiduity from the opening of the year 1629 until May, when he broke down again, and for the next six months he absolutely disappears from us. We find him, however, preaching at Paul’s Cross in November. For the first time, however, since he was appointed Dean, he was not able to preach in his Cathedral on Christmas Day 1629.

The only other fact I have been able to trace, with regard to Donne’s life in 1629, is that in June he sat at

Lambeth on a commission consisting of Laud, himself, and the Bishops of Winchester and Norwich, to decide a dispute which had broken out between the Bishop of Salisbury and the Dean and Chapter of that diocese. The four commissioners met several times and "endeavoured to accommodate the differences" between the parties; and on the 22nd of June they submitted their report to the King.

It is curious that the last years of Donne, when he was so celebrated and so prominent, should, in spite of the evidence of Izaak Walton, be particularly obscure and empty of detail. But the probability is that there was very little in them which could have been recorded. It is plain that the Dean's fondness for letter-writing had ceased. His days were probably now spent in an extreme monotony. Conscious of descending vitality, he would garner his strength more and more carefully, to expend it on the needful duties of his clerical calling. To prepare his sermons at the wheel of desks in his library would now be the most exciting of his adventures. He preached a lengthy and important example of these addresses for the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, on the 25th of January 1630. He preached, perhaps for the last time in St. Paul's, on Easter Day, March 28, 1630; and at Court, "in Lent to the King," on the 23rd of April 1630.<sup>1</sup> It has been supposed that, soon after this date, his health again broke down; but of this I find no evidence, and Walton distinctly says that God having "restored his health, continued it to him till" August 1630.

A great deal has been said as to the reasons why Donne, so eminently what Hobbes would call an "episcopable" person, was never made a bishop. It has even been asserted, on pure conjecture, that Donne was told when he took Orders that he would never be considered eligible for prelacy. All these questions and presumptions are ruled out of court by the discovery that in the summer of 1630 Charles I. designed Donne for promotion to be a bishop. There even exists a

<sup>1</sup> Misprinted "April 20" in the 1640 edition (p. 127). Dr. Jessopp points out that the third Sunday after Easter fell on the 23rd.

document,<sup>1</sup> drawn up apparently in August of that year, discussing what benefices "will fall into his Majesty's donation" when the Dean of St. Paul's has been "advanced to a Bishopric," and naming, with St. Dunstan's in the West, "Pancridge near London," which seems to be St. Pancras. What Donne's hold on this latter parish was does not seem to be elsewhere recorded. The vicarage of St. Pancras, "alias Kentish Town," was attached to a prebend of St. Paul's, but Donne's friend, Henry King, had been appointed to it since January 24, 1616. He continued to hold it until the 15th of March 1641, when he was made Bishop of Chichester. I cannot help conjecturing that "Pancridge" is simply a slip of the pen for Chiswick, which was Donne's prebend, and would have been vacated on his being raised to a bishopric. It appears, at all events, that it was settled by August 1630, that Donne was sufficiently "safe," in Laud's sense, to have a diocese entrusted to him. But at this very moment came the entire breakdown of his health and his enforced retirement at Abury Hatch. It was useless, and worse than useless, to promote a dying man to a post of labour and responsibility. But the legend that there was some mysterious prejudice against Donne, which closed the path of episcopal promotion to him, must now be dismissed. Had Donne's health been good, he would have been a bishop before the close of 1630.

On the 24th of June of this year, his widowed eldest daughter, Constance Alleyn, had married Samuel Harvey of Aldborough Hatch, a mansion and estate in Epping Forest, near Barking, in Essex. The bridegroom was a grandson of that Sir James Harvey, alderman of London, with whom Donne's father had served his apprenticeship. Walton tells us that in this fatal August, Donne went down to "Abury Hatch" (for so it was pronounced) to visit his daughter, and there "fell into a fever, which, with the help of his constant infirmity—vapours from the spleen—hastened him into so visible a consumption, that his beholders might say 'he dies daily.'" This disease lingered long, weakening

<sup>1</sup> Domestic State Papers.

and wearying him ; he was tended through it by his faithful personal servant, Robert Christmas. He was “ forced to spend much of that winter ” at Abury Hatch, “ by reason of his disability to remove from that place.” At the end of October he wrote as follows to his old and devoted friend, the Master of the Charterhouse. The Lord Percy here mentioned was Algernon Percy, son of that melancholy spirit, the third Earl of Northumberland, who had languished so long in the Tower, and who was now near the close of his luckless career. Lord Percy, who was to succeed as fourth Earl of Northumberland in 1632, was, as Sir Philip Warwick says in his *Memoirs*, “ a graceful young man of great sobriety and regularity.” It is strange, however, that even he should come between Donne and his closest friend, Lord Carlisle. George, it may be observed, was now serving in the army in Spain, and his father had no news of him :—

“ *To my very much honoured friend GEORGE GERRARD,  
Esquire, at Sion.*<sup>1</sup>

“ SIR,—I know not which of us won it by the hand, in the last charge of letters. If you won, you won nothing, because I am nothing, or whatsoever I am, you won nothing, because I was all yours before. I doubt not but I were better delivered of dangers of relapses if I were at London ; but the very going would endanger me. Upon which true debility, I was forced to excuse myself to my Lord Chamberlain, from whom I had a letter of command to have preached the 5th of November sermon to the King. A service which I would not have declined, if I could have conceived any hope of standing it. I beseech you entreat my Lord Percy in my behalf, that he will be pleased to name George to my Lord Carlisle, and to wonder, if not to enquire, where he is. The world is disposed to charge my Lord’s honour, and to charge my natural affection with neglecting him, and, God knows, I know not which way to turn towards him ; nor upon any message of mine, when I

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

send to kiss my Lord's hands, doth my Lord make any kind of mention of him.

“For the Diamond Lady, when time serves, I pray look to it, for I would fain be discharged of it. And for the rest, let them be but remembered how long it hath been in my hands, and then leave it to their discretion. If they incline to anything, I should choose shirt Holland, rather under than above 4s. Our blessed Saviour multiply His blessings upon that noble family where you are, and yourself and your son, as upon all them that are derived from your poor friend and servant,

“J. DONNE.”

[October 1630.]

Donne did not contrive to preach the Gunpowder Plot sermon, and, for the first time in twenty years, he did not even preach before the King at Christmas. He was mewed in his son-in-law's house in Abury Hatch. The next letter should, perhaps, be dated in December 1630.

“*To my honoured friend G. G[ERRARD], Esquire.*<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—I should not only send you an account by my servant, but bring you an account often myself (for our letters are ourselves, and in them absent friends meet) how I do, but that two things make me forbear that writing: first, because it is not for my gravity to write of feathers and straws and, in good faith, I am no more considered in my body or fortune. And then because whensoever I tell you how I do, by a letter, before that letter comes to you, I shall be otherwise than when it left me. At this time, I humbly thank God, I am only not worse; for I should as soon look for roses at this time of the year as look for increase of strength. And if I be no worse all spring than now, I am much better, for, I make account that those Church services, which I would be very loth to decline, will spend somewhat; and, if I can gather so much as will bear my charges, recover so much strength at London, as I shall

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

spend at London, I shall not be loth to be left in that state wherein I am now after that's done. But I do but discourse, I do not wish; iife, or health, or strength (I thank God) enter not into my prayers for myself; for others they do, and amongst others for your sick servant, for such a servant taken so young, and healed so long, is half a child to a master, and so truly I have observed that you have bred him with the care of a father. Our blessed Saviour look graciously upon him, and glorify Himself in him, by his way of restitution to health, and by his way of peace of conscience in your very true friend and servant in Christ Jesus,

“J. DONNE.”

“*To my very much honoured friend*  
GEORGE GERRARD, Esq.<sup>1</sup>

“SIR,—When we think of a friend, we do not count that a lost thought, though that friend never knew of it. If we write to a friend, we must not call it a lost letter, though it never find him to whom it was addressed, for we owe ourselves that office to be mindful of our friends. In payment of that debt, I send out this letter, as a sentinel perdue; if it find you, it comes to tell you that I was possessed with a fever, so late in the year, that I am afraid I shall not recover confidence to come to London till the spring be a little advanced.

“Because you did our poor family the favour to mention our George in your letters to Spain with some earnestness, I should wonder if you never had anything from thence concerning him, he having been now divers months in Spain.

“If you be in London and the Lady of the Jewel there too, at your convenience inform me what is looked for at my hands, in that business; for I would be loth to leave anything in my house, when I die, that were not absolutely mine own. I have a servant, Roper, at Paul's House, who will receive your commandments at all times. God bless

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

you and your son, with the same blessings which I beg for the children, and for the person of

“Your poor friend and humble servant in Christ Jesus  
“J. DONNE.”

[Abury Hatch, *December 1630.*]

On the 13th of December, Donne drew up his will, a long, elaborate, and interesting document, a copy of which is printed later on.<sup>1</sup>

[*To GEORGE GERRARD.*]<sup>2</sup>

“SIR,—This advantage you and my other friends have, by my frequent fevers, that I am so much the oftener at the gates of heaven, and this advantage by the solitude and close imprisonment that they reduce me to after, that I am so much the oftener at my prayers; in which, I shall never leave out your happiness; and, I doubt not, but amongst His [many] other blessings, God will add to you some one for my prayers. A man would almost be content to die (if there were no other benefit in death) to hear of so much sorrow, and so much good testimony from good men, as I (God be blessed for it) did upon the report of my death.

“Yet I perceive it went not through all; for one writ unto me that some (and he said of my friends) conceived [that] I was not so ill as I pretended, but withdrew myself, [to save charges], and to live at ease, discharged of preaching. It is an unfriendly, and, God knows, an ill-grounded interpretation: [for in these times of necessity, and multitudes of poor, there is no possibility of saving to him that hath any tenderness in him; and for affecting my ease], I have been always more sorry when I could not preach, than any could be that they could not hear me. It hath been my desire (and God may be pleased to grant it me) that I might die in the pulpit; if not that, yet that I might take my death in the pulpit, that is, die the sooner by occasion of my former labours.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> From Walton's *Life*, 1640. The portions within brackets were added in 1651.

[“I thank you for keeping our George in your memory ; I hope God reserves it for so good a friend as you are, to send me the first good news of him.

“For the Diamond Lady, you may safely deliver Roper whatsoever belongs to me, and he will give you a discharge for the money. For my Lord Percy, we shall speak of it when we meet at London ; which, as I do not much hope before Christmas, so I do not much fear at beginning of term ; for I have entreated one of my fellows to preach to my Lord Mayor at Paul’s upon Christmas Day, and reserved Candlemas Day to myself for that service, about which time also will fall my Lent sermon], except my Lord Chamberlain believe me to be dead, and leave me out ; for as long as I live, and am not speechless, I would not willingly decline that service. I have better leisure to write than you to read, yet I will not oppress you with too much letter. God bless you and your son, as I wish.

“Your poor friend and humble servant in Christ Jesus,  
“J. DONNE.”

January 7, 1630[1].

Always more confidential to Mrs. Cokain than to any other friend, he gives her particulars of his ailments such as are not vouchsafed to the Master of the Charterhouse. The Mr. Hazard, who is mentioned so unfavourably in the second of these letters, is doubtless that Nathaniel Hazard, tutor to Mrs. Cokain’s sons, who is mentioned in the *Poems* of Sir Aston Cokain.

“To my noble friend Mrs. COKAIN, at Ashbourne.<sup>1</sup>

“MY NOBLEST SISTER,—But that it is sweetened by your command, nothing could trouble me more than to write of myself. Yet, if I would have it known, I must write it myself ; for I neither tell children nor servants my state. I have never good temper, nor good pulse, nor good appetite, nor good sleep. Yet I have so much leisure to recollect myself, as that I can think I have been long thus,

<sup>1</sup> From the *Letters* of 1651.

or often thus. I am not alive, because I have not had enough upon me to kill me, but because it pleases God to pass me through many infirmities before He take me either by those particular remembrances to bring me to particular repentances, or by them to give me hope of His particular mercies in heaven. Therefore have I been more affected with coughs in vehemence, more with deafness, more with toothache, more with the vurbah [? uvula], than heretofore.

“ All this mellows me for heaven, and so ferments me in this world as I shall need no long concoction in the grave, but hasten to the resurrection. Not only to be nearer that grave, but to be nearer to the service of the Church, as long as I shall be able to do any, I purpose, God willing, to be at London within a fortnight after your receipt of this, as well because I am under the obligation of preaching at Paul’s upon Candlemas Day, as because I know nothing to the contrary, but that I may be called to Court for Lent service; and my witness is in heaven, that I never left out St. Dunstan’s when I was able to do them that service, nor will now; though they that know the state of that Church well, know that I am not so bound, as the world thinks, to preach there; for I make not a shilling profit of St. Dunstan’s as a Churchman, but as my Lord of Dorset gave me the lease of the Impropriation for a certain rent, and a higher rent than my predecessor had it at.

“ This I am fain to say often, because they that know it not, have defamed me of a defectiveness towards that Church; and even that mistaking of theirs I ever have, and ever shall endeavour to rectify, by as often preaching there as my condition of body will admit. All our company here is well, but not at home now when I write; for, lest I should not have another return to London before the day of your carrier, I write this, and rest

“ Your very affectionate servant, and friend, and brother,  
“ J. DONNE.”

Abury Hatch, 15th January 1630[1].

The opinion of Dr. Norman Moore is that the onsets of fever which Donne describes as separate and sudden were

probably a combination of recurrent quinsy (*angina faucium*), with true, "frequent fevers" of a malarial kind, such as places near Barking still produce. The words "fell into a fever" may be indicative of the flushing of weakness, with or without rise of temperature, which the physicians of that day had not begun to measure. The same remark applies to the "fever every half year." The absence of any mention of coughing—save in one instance, "more affected with coughs"—seems to exclude the fever of tuberculosis. The "damps and flashings" for four or five days exactly describe the symptoms of a malarial attack.

Dr. William Clement was a fellow of the College of Physicians, and Dr. Laurence Wright, who was afterwards physician to the Protector, was another fellow.

"*To Mrs. COKAIN.*<sup>1</sup>

"**MY NOBLE DEAR SISTER**,—I am come now, not only to pay a fever every half year as a rent for my life; but I am called upon before the day, and they come sooner in the year than heretofore. This fever that I had now, I hoped, for divers days, to have been but an exaltation of my damps and flashings, such as exercise me sometimes four or five days, and pass away without whining or complaint. But, I neglected this somewhat too long, which makes me (though, after I took it into consideration, the fever itself declined quickly) much weaker, than, perchance, otherwise I should have been. I had Dr. Foxe and Dr. Clement with me, but, I thank God, was not much trouble to them. Ordinary means set me soon upon my legs, and I have broke my close prison, and walked into the garden; and (but that the weather hath continued so spitefully foul) make no doubt, but I might safely have done more. I eat and digest well enough, and it is no strange thing that I do not sleep well, for, in my best health, I am not much used to do so. At the same time, little Betty had a fever too, and, for her, we used Dr. Wright, who, by occasion, lies within two miles of us; and he was able to ease my

<sup>1</sup> From the Tobie Matthew Collection.

sickness with his report of your good health, which, he told us, he had received from you. But I found it not seconded in your own letters, which I had the honour to receive by Mr. Hazard.

“ My noble sister, I am afraid that death will play with me so long, as he will forget to kill me, and suffer me to live in a languishing and useless age, a life, that is rather a forgetting that I am dead, than of living. We dispute whether the dead shall pray for the living ; and because my life may be short, I pray with the most earnestness for you now. By the advantage of sickness I return the oftener to that holy exercise, and in it join yours with mine own soul. I would not have dignified myself, or my sickness, with saying so much of either, but that it is in obedience to your command that I should do so. And though there lies upon me no command, yet there lies a necessity growing out of my respect, and a nobler root, than that my love to you, to enlarge myself, as far as I have gone already, in Mr. Hazard’s business.

“ My noble sister, when you carry me up to the beginning, which it pleases you to call a promise to yourself, and your noble sister ; I never slackened my purpose of performing that promise. But if my promise, which was, that I should be ready to assist him in anything I could, were translated by you, or your noble sister, or him, that I would give him the next living in my gift, certainly we speak not one language, or understand not one another, and I had thought we had ; this which he imagined to be vacant (for it is not yet, nor any way likely) is the first that fell to me, since I made that promise ; and, my noble sister, if a person of my place, from whom one scholar in each university sucks something, and must be weaned by me, and who hath otherwise a latitude of importunate friends, and very many obligations, have a living once in five or six years fall in his gift (for it is so long since I gave any) and may not make a good choice with freedom then, it is hard ; yet it is not my fortune to do so now : for, now there is a living fallen (though not that), I am not left to my choice. For my Lords Carlisle and Percy have chosen for

me, but truly such a man as I would have chosen; and for him, they laid an obligation upon me three years since, for the next that should fall; yet Mr. Hazard presses you to write for that, because he to whom my promise belongs hath another before, but doth he or his Lord owe me anything for that? Yet Mr. Hazard importunes me to press that chaplain of my Lord, that when he takes mine, he shall resign the other to him, which, as it is an ignorant request (for if it be resigned, it is not in his power to place it upon Mr. Hazard) so it is an unjust request, that I that give him fifty pounds a year, should take from him forty.

"But amongst Mr. Hazard's manifold importunities, that that I took worst, was, that he should write of domestic things, and what I said of my son to you, and arm you with that plea, that my son was not in Orders. But, my noble sister, though I am far from drawing my son immaturely into Orders, or putting into his hands any Church with cure; yet there are many prebends and other helps in the Church, which a man without taking Orders may be capable of, and for some such I might change a living with cure, and so begin to accommodate a son in some preparation. But Mr. Hazard is too piercing. It is good counsel (and as I remember I gave it him), that if a man deny him anything, and accompany his denial with a reason, he be not too searching, whether that be the true reason or no, but rest in the denial, for many times it may be out of my power to do a man a courtesy which he desires, and yet I not tied to tell him the true reason; therefore out of his letter to you I continue my opinion that he meddled too far herein.

"I cannot shut my letter till (whilst we are upon this consideration of reasons of denials) I tell you one answer of his, which perchance may weaken your so great assurance of his modesty. I told him that my often sicknesses had brought me to an inability of preaching, and that I was under a necessity of preaching twelve or fourteen solemn sermons every year, to great auditories

at Paul's, and to the judges, and at Court; and that, therefore, I must think of conferring something upon such a man as may supply my place in these solemnities; and surely, said I, I will offer them no man in those cases which shall not be at least equal to myself; and, Mr. Hazard, I do not know your faculties. He gave me this answer, I will not make comparisons, but I do not doubt but I should give them satisfaction in that kind. Now, my noble sister, whereas you repeat often, that you and your sister rested upon my word, and my worth; and, but for my word and my worth, you would not have proceeded so far: I must necessarily make my protestation, that my word and my worth is herein, as chaste, and untouched as the best maidenhead in the world. For, my noble sister, goes there no more to the giving of a scholar a church in London, but that he was a young gentleman's schoolmaster? You know the ticklishness of London pulpits, and how ill it would become me to place a man in a London church that were not both a strong and a sound man. And therefore, those things must come into consideration before he can have a living from me; though there was no need of reflecting upon those things, when I made that general promise, that I would assist his fortune in anything.

“You end in a phrase of indignation and displeasure, rare in you towards me, therefore it affects me; which is, that he may part from me, as I received him at first, as though I were likely to hinder him. The heat that produced that word I know is past, and therefore, my most beloved sister, give me leave to say to you, that he shall not part from me, but I shall keep him still in my care, and make you always my judge of all omissions.—Your faithful friend and servant

“J. DONNE.”

[January 1631.]

He came back to London to find that Dr. Thomas Moundeford, the President of the College of Physicians, a man of eighty-four, had died, and that Donne's own medical

man, Simeon Foxe, had, on the 22nd of December, been elected President in his place. Dr. Foxe, on examining the Dean medically, considered that, “by cordials and drinking milk twenty days together, there was a probability of his restoration.” Donne, however, seems to have had an extreme distaste for milk, and “he passionately denied to drink it.” Nevertheless, says Walton :—

“Dr. Foxe, who loved him most entirely, wearied him with solicitations, till he yielded to take it for ten days; at the end of which time he told Dr. Foxe he had drunk it more to satisfy him than to recover his health, and that he would not drink it ten days longer, upon the best moral assurance of having twenty years added to his life; for he loved it not, and was so far from fearing death, which to others is the King of Terrors, that he longed for the day of his dissolution.”

The moment has now come, indeed, for the modern biographer to withdraw, and to let the reader listen to the incomparable recital of the sole authority for these last days, Izaak Walton. He says :—

“He was appointed to preach upon his old constant day, the first Friday in Lent; he had notice of it, and had in his sickness so prepared for that employment, that as he had long thirsted for it, so he resolved his weakness should not hinder his journey; he came therefore to London some few days before his appointed day of preaching. At his coming thither, many of his friends—who with sorrow saw his sickness had left him but so much flesh as did only cover his bones—doubted his strength to perform that task, and did therefore dissuade him from undertaking it, assuring him, however, it was like to shorten his life; but he passionately denied their requests, saying he would not doubt that that God, who in so many weaknesses had assisted him with an unexpected strength, would now withdraw it in his last employment; professing an holy ambition to perform that sacred work. And when, to the amazement of some beholders, he appeared in the pulpit, many of them thought he presented himself not to preach mortification by a living voice, but mortality by a decayed body and

a dying face. And doubtless many did secretly ask that question in Ezekiel : ' Do these bones live ? or, can that soul organise that tongue, to speak so long as the sand in that glass will move towards its centre, and measure out an hour of this dying man's unspent life ? Doubtless it cannot.' And yet, after some faint pauses in his zealous prayer, his strong desires enabled his weak body to discharge his memory of his preconceived meditations, which were of dying ; the text being, ' To God the Lord belong the issues from death.' Many that then saw his tears, and heard his faint and hollow voice, professing they thought the text prophetically chosen, and that Dr. Donne had preached his own funeral sermon.

" Being full of joy that God had enabled him to perform this desired duty, he hastened to his house ; out of which he never moved, till, like St. Stephen, ' he was carried by devout men to his grave.'

" The next day after his sermon, his strength being much wasted, and his spirits so spent as indisposed him to business or to talk, a friend that had often been a witness of his free and facetious discourse asked him, ' Why are you sad ? ' To whom he replied, with a countenance so full of cheerful gravity, as gave testimony of an inward tranquillity of mind, and of a soul willing to take a farewell of this world ; and said—

" ' I am not sad ; but most of the night past I have entertained myself with many thoughts of several friends that have left me here, and are gone to that place from which they shall not return ; and that within a few days I also shall go hence, and be no more seen. And my preparation for this change is become my nightly meditation upon my bed, which my infirmities have now made restless to me. But at this present time, I was in a serious contemplation of the providence and goodness of God to me ; to me, who am less than the least of His mercies ; and looking back upon my life past, I now plainly see it was His hand that prevented me from all temporal employment ; and that it was His will I should never settle nor thrive till I entered into the ministry ; in which I have now lived almost twenty

years—I hope to His glory—and by which, I most humbly thank Him, I have been enabled to requite most of those friends which showed me kindness when my fortune was very low, as God knows it was: and—as it hath occasioned the expression of my gratitude—I thank God most of them have stood in need of my requital. I have lived to be useful and comfortable to my good father-in-law, Sir George More, whose patience God hath been pleased to exercise with many temporal crosses; I have maintained my own mother, whom it hath pleased God, after a plentiful fortune in her younger days, to bring to great decay in her very old age. I have quieted the consciences of many, that have groaned under the burthen of a wounded spirit, whose prayers I hope are available for me. I cannot plead innocence of life, especially of my youth; but I am to be judged by a merciful God, who is not willing to see what I have done amiss. And though of myself I have nothing to present to Him but sins and misery, yet I know He looks not upon me now as I am of myself, but as I am in my Saviour, and hath given me, even at this present time, some testimonies by His Holy Spirit, that I am of the number of His Elect: I am therefore full of inexpressible joy, and shall die in peace.”

This, the last of Donne's sermons, was preached before the King at Whitehall on the 12th of February 1631. It was published soon after his decease as *Death's Duel*. It was called by the King's household “The Doctor's own funeral sermon.”

One of the curious preparations for death which Donne made about this time, was the ordering of certain seals, cut in bloodstones, then called “Heliotropes,” of which Walton gives the following account:—

“ He caused to be drawn a figure of the body of Christ, extended upon an anchor, like those which painters draw, when they would present us with the picture of Christ crucified on the Cross; his varying no otherwise than to affix him, not to a cross, but to an anchor (the emblem of hope); this he caused to be drawn in little, and then many of those figures, thus drawn, to be engraven very small in

Heliotrope stones, and set in gold; and of these he sent to many of his dearest friends, to be used as seals, or rings, and kept as memorials of him, and of his affection to them."

It is indicated that Sir Henry Wotton, Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, Bryan Dupper, Henry King, and probably Walton himself, were among the recipients of these seals. As they undoubtedly differed from "that figure which I usually seal withal," which was the Donne sheaf of snakes, and as they are not mentioned in the very elaborate provisions of the will, it seems certain that they were executed after Donne's return to town in January 1631. This agrees with Walton's suggestion that the distribution of them was a mode of bidding farewell to all those with whom Donne was in closest spiritual sympathy. Among these George Herbert took a place second to none, since the solemn act by which, on the 26th of April 1630, he had finally severed his connection with the Court and the world, and had been inducted into the "more pleasant than beautiful parsonage" of Bemerton, which he was to make so illustrious in the history of English religion and poetry.

We have seen that the persistent legend, which Donne himself encouraged, that his metrical faculty abandoned him in youth, was absolutely false. He was a poet to his latest hour, and we possess the fervent lines with which he accompanied the gift of one of his seals—

"TO MR. GEORGE HERBERT;

SENT HIM WITH ONE OF MY SEALS OF THE ANCHOR AND CHRIST.

*A sheaf of snakes used heretofore to be my seal, which is the crest of our poor family."*

With this was sent a Latin version of the same poem, beginning:—

"*Qui prius assuetus serpentum fasce tabellas  
Signare, haec nostræ symbola parva domus,  
Adscitus domui Domini.*—

Adopted in God's family, and so  
 My old coat lost, into new arms I go.  
 The cross my seal in baptism spread below,  
 Does by that form into an anchor grow.  
 Crosses grow anchors; bear as thou shouldst do  
 Thy cross, and that cross grows an anchor too.  
 But He that makes our crosses anchors thus,  
 Is Christ, who there is crucified for us.  
 Yet with this I may my first serpents hold  
 (God gives new blessings, and yet leaves the old);  
 The serpent may, as wise, my pattern be;  
 My poison, as he feeds on dust, that's me.  
 And, as he rounds the earth to murder, sure  
 He is my death; but on the cross my cure.  
 Crucify nature then; and then implore  
 All grace from Him, crucified there before.  
 When all is cross, and that cross anchor grown,  
 This seal's a catechism, not a seal alone.  
 Under that little seal great gifts I send,  
 Both works and pray'rs, pawns, and fruits of a friend.  
 O may that saint that rides on our great seal,  
 To you that bear His name large bounty deal.

JOHN DONNE."

Herbert replied in Latin and English verse.

These exercises, perhaps, belong to the month of January, but during his last illness, and indeed only eight days before his death, Donne composed the latest, and far from the least fascinating, of his poems—

“A HYMN TO GOD, MY GOD, IN MY SICKNESS.<sup>1</sup>

MARCH 23, 1621.

“ Since I am coming to that holy room,  
 Where, with Thy Choir of Saints, for evermore  
 I shall be made Thy music, as I come  
 I tune my instrument here at the door,  
 And, what I must do then, think here before.

<sup>1</sup> On a copy of these stanzas preserved among the papers of Sir Julius Cæsar, they are said to have been written in the Dean's "great sickness in December 1623"; the copyist having confounded them with the "Hymn to God the Father," which belongs to that period.

Whilst my physicians by their love are grown  
 Cosmographers, and I their map, who lie  
 Flat on this bed, that by them may be shown  
 That this is my south-west discovery,  
*Per fretum febris*, by these straits to die.

I joy, that in these straits I see my west;  
 For, though those currents yield return to none,  
 What shall my west hurt me? As west and east  
 In all flat maps—and I am one—are one,  
 So death doth touch the resurrection.

Is the Pacific sea my home? Or are  
 The eastern riches? Is Jerusalem?  
 Anyan, and Magellan, and Gibraltar?  
 All straits, and none but straits, are ways to them  
 Whether where Japhet dwelt, or Cham, or Shem.

We think that Paradise and Calvary,  
 Christ's cross and Adam's tree, stood in one place;  
 Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me;  
 As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,  
 May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace.

So, in His purple wrapp'd, receive me, Lord;  
 By these His thorns, give me His other crown;  
 And as to others' souls I preach'd Thy word,  
 Be this my text, my sermon to mine own,  
 'Therefore that He may raise, the Lord throws down.'"

The evidence of the vigour of Donne's dying brain supplied by these verses is amazing. He had never, in the hey-day of his youth and genius, expressed himself with a more complete originality or more fully in accordance with the peculiarities of his intellectual temperament than in this his farewell to mortality.

A little earlier than this, but during the latest month of Donne's life, that extraordinary incident took place which illustrates for us, in the highest degree, the morbid and fantastic character of his genius. Simeon Foxe, perceiving that the end of his illustrious patient was approaching, entreated him not to leave the world without having made some preparation for a monument to himself in his Cathedral. The Dean easily yielded to these persuasions, but



THE MONUMENT TO DONNE IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL



stipulated that Dr. Foxe should not interfere in any way whatever with the character or form of the memorial. In fact, as will presently be related, it was executed at the commission of the executors, and probably paid for either out of Donne's personal estate or at the expense of the Chapter. Of what followed, Walton has preserved an inimitable account:—

“A monument being resolved upon, Dr. Donne sent for a carver to make for him in wood the figure of an urn, giving him directions for the compass and height of it; and to bring with it a board, of the just height of his body. These being got, then without delay a choice painter was got to be in readiness to draw his picture, which was taken as followeth:—Several charcoal fires being first made in his large study, he brought with him into that place his winding-sheet in his hand, and having put off all his clothes, had this sheet put on him, and so tied with knots at his head and feet, and his hands so placed as dead bodies are usually fitted, to be shrouded and put into their coffin or grave. Upon this urn he thus stood, with his eyes shut, and with so much of the sheet turned aside as might show his lean, pale, and death-like face, which was purposely turned towards the east, from whence he expected the second coming of his and our Saviour Jesus. In this posture he was drawn at his just height; and when the picture was fully finished, he caused it to be set by his bedside, where it continued and became his hourly object till his death, and was then given to his dearest friend and executor, Dr. Henry King, then chief Residentiary of St. Paul's, who caused him to be thus carved in one entire piece of white marble, as it now stands in that church; and by Dr. Donne's own appointment, these words were to be affixed to it as an epitaph:—

“JOHANNES DONNE,

SAC. THEOL. PROFESS.

POST VARIA STUDIA QUIBUS AB ANNIS  
TENERRIMIS FIDELITER, NEC INFELICITER  
INCUBUIT;  
INSTINCTU ET IMPULSU SP. SANCTI, MONITU  
ET HORTATU  
REGIS JACOBI, ORDINES SACROS AMPLEXUS  
ANNO SUI IESU MDCXIV. ET SUÆ ÆTATIS XLII.  
DECANATU HUJUS ECCLESIAE INDUTUS  
XXVII. NOVEMBRIS, MDCXXI.  
EXUTUS MORTE ULTIMO DIE MARTII MDCXXXI.  
HIC LICET IN OCCIDUO CINERE ASPICIT EUM  
CUJUS NOMEN EST ORIENS.”<sup>1</sup>

It has been observed that the reference to Him, “cujus nomen est Oriens,” indicates that the Dean was to be buried looking towards the east. Donne was fond of this expression; “Oriens nomen ejus” he had said in one of his letters to Sir Robert Ker.<sup>2</sup> Oriens is used by St. Hilary as a name for Christ.

Five weeks seem to have elapsed between Donne’s preaching his last sermon, and his finally taking to his bed. Many of the preparations of which Walton tells us may be dated between the 12th of February and the 16th of March.

<sup>1</sup> This epitaph was translated as follows by that elegant occasional writer, Archdeacon Francis Wrangham (1769-1843):—

“JOHN DONNE,  
Doctor of Divinity,  
after various studies, pursued by him from his earliest years  
with assiduity and not without success,  
entered into Holy Orders,  
under the influence and impulse of the Divine Spirit  
and by the advice and exhortation of King James,  
in the year of his Saviour 1614, and of his own age 42.  
Having been invested with the Deanery of this Church,  
November 27, 1621,  
he was stripped of it by Death on the last day of March 1631:  
and here, though set in dust, he beholdeth Him  
Whose name is the Rising.”

<sup>2</sup> See p. 191 of the present volume.

On, or about, the second of these dates, the strange funeral painting, upon which his monument was to be designed, having been finished, the Dean of St. Paul's took his last leave of his beloved study. Walton says:—

“Being sensible of his hourly decay, he retired himself to his bedchamber, and that week sent at several times for many of his most considerable friends, with whom he took a solemn and deliberate farewell, commanding to their considerations some sentences useful for the regulation of their lives; and then dismissed them, as good Jacob did his sons, with a spiritual benediction. The Sunday following [March 20] he appointed his servants, that if there were any business yet undone, that concerned him or themselves, it should be prepared against Saturday next [March 26]; for after that day he would not mix his thoughts with anything that concerned this world; nor ever did; but, as Job, so he ‘waited for the appointed day of his dissolution.’

“And now he was so happy as to have nothing to do but to die; to do which, he stood in need of no longer time; for he had studied it long, and to so happy a perfection, that in a former sickness he called God to witness (in his book of *Devotions* written then) ‘he was that minute ready to deliver his soul into His hands, if that minute God would determine his dissolution.’ In that sickness he begged of God the constancy to be preserved in that estate for ever; and his patient expectation to have his immortal soul disrobed from her garment of mortality makes me confident that he now had a modest assurance that his prayers were then heard, and his petition granted. He lay fifteen days earnestly expecting his hourly change; and in the last hour of his last day [March 31, 1631], as his body melted away and vapoured into spirit, his soul having, I verily believe, some revelation of the beatifical vision, he said, ‘I were miserable if I might not die’; and after those words closed many periods of his faint breath by saying often, ‘Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.’ His speech, which had long been his ready and faithful servant, left him not till the last minute of his life, and then forsook

him, not to serve another master (for who speaks like him?), but died before him; for that it was then become useless to him that now conversed with God on earth, as angels are said to do in heaven, *only by thoughts and looks*. Being speechless, and seeing heaven by that illumination by which he saw it, he did, as St. Stephen, 'look stedfastly into it, till he saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God' His Father; and being satisfied with this blessed sight, as his soul ascended and his last breath departed from him, he closed his own eyes, and then disposed his hands and body into such a posture, as required not the least alteration by those that came to shroud him.

"Thus variable, thus virtuous was the life; thus excellent, thus exemplary was the death of this memorable man.

"He was buried in that place of St. Paul's Church which he had appointed for that use some years before his death, and by which he passed daily to pay his public devotions to Almighty God (who was then served twice a day by a public form of prayer and praises in that place); but he was not buried privately, though he desired it, for, beside an unnumbered number of others, many persons of nobility, and of eminency for learning, who did love and honour him in his life, did show it at his death, by a voluntary and sad attendance of his body to the grave, where nothing was so remarkable as a public sorrow.

"To which place of his burial some mournful friends repaired; and, as Alexander the Great did to the grave of the famous Achilles, so they strewed his with an abundance of curious and costly flowers, which course they (who were never yet known) continued morning and evening for many days, not ceasing till the stones that were taken up in that Church, to give his body admission into the cold earth (now his bed of rest) were again by the mason's art so levelled and firmed as they had been formerly, and his place of burial undistinguishable to common view.

"The next day after his burial some unknown friend, some one<sup>1</sup> of the many lovers and admirers of his virtue

<sup>1</sup> No doubt, Izaak Walton himself.

and learning, writ this epitaph with a coal on the wall over his grave—

‘ Reader ! I am to let thee know  
Donne’s body only lies below ;  
For, could the grave his soul comprise,  
Earth would be richer than the skies.’

“ Nor was this all the honour done to his reverend ashes ; for as there be some persons that will not receive a reward for that for which God accounts Himself a debtor ; persons that dare trust God with their charity, and without a witness ; so there was, by some grateful unknown friend, that thought Dr. Donne’s memory ought to be perpetuated, an hundred marks sent to his two faithful friends and executors (Dr. King and Dr. Montford), towards the making of his monument. It was not for many years known by whom ; but after the death of Dr. Foxe, it was known that it was he that sent it ; and he lived to see as lively a representation of his dead friend as marble can express ; a statue indeed so like Dr. Donne that (as his friend Sir Henry Wotton hath expressed himself) ‘ it seems to breathe faintly, and posterity shall look upon it as a kind of artificial miracle.’ ”

Of Donne’s own funeral sermon no record seems to exist, but I gather from an expression of Sir Lucius Carey’s that it was preached by Laud himself. The burial was attended by a most distinguished congregation of the laity, and the poets were “ chief mourners at his hearse.” Carew volunteered a splendid epitaph—

“ Here lies a King, that ruled as he thought fit  
The universal monarchy of wit ;  
Here lies two flamens,—and both those the best,—  
Apollo’s first, and last the true God’s priest.”

There can be no question that the extremely vivid and scenic mode of Donne’s preparations for death fascinated the age, and did more than anything else to rivet contemporary attention. It would, however, be completely to misunderstand his temper if we were led to question the sincerity of an attitude which seems to us forced and almost

theatrical. What we really distinguish in this elaborate, public decease, so long-drawn, so solemn, so boldly picturesque, is the profoundly Renaissance attitude of the principal actor. It was a piece of public tragedy, performed in solemn earnest, with an intention half chivalrous, half hortatory, by a religious humanist whose temper was of the sixteenth century, and not of the realistic, busy, semi-democratic seventeenth into which he had survived. So Sir Philip Sidney died at Arnhem, with musicians performing his own poem of *La Cuisse Cassée* at his bedside. So Bernard Palissy died in the Bastille, defying Henri III. to his face in a dramatic defence of his convictions. This was the Renaissance relation to human life, which was, after all, only a stage, on the boards of which a man of originality and principle must nerve himself to play *le beau rôle* to the last moment, in a final bout with a veritable Death, armed with scythe and hour-glass, a skeleton only just unseen, but accepted as something more than a mere convention. After Donne's day, the increase of rationalism, a decay of the fantastic and poetic conception of existence, and perhaps a certain invasion of humour into daily life, made such a death as his impossible. And, even in 1631, it was old-fashioned enough and unintelligible enough to attract boundless public attention. It was the manner of Donne's death that set the pinnacle on the edifice of his mysterious celebrity. All this is indicated, as in a symbol, in the extremely original statue of him, representing him wrapped in his winding-sheet, which was put up in St. Paul's by Nicholas Stone, at the initiative of Dr. Foxe.

This monument to Donne has only of recent years been restored to what was in all probability its approximate original position. What was the mode of its fixture in the Gothic cathedral is doubtful, for examination will show that, while the urn on which the figure stands is rounded, the statue itself is cut flat at the back. The sculptures and the inscribed entablature above, are in their original state; the niche is modern. I do not know that there is any record of the mode in which this solitary monument

was preserved intact in the Great Fire. Perhaps the crash of the great falling wooden spire buried it in debris ; it is even not impossible that a rope may have been thrown round the neck, and the whole work have been softly tilted forwards, and so carried out of the blaze. At all events, it appears to be the only relic of the old building preserved in anything like its pristine condition. The fragments now in the Crypt—including the highly-finished and elaborate effigy of Sir William Cokayne—are in a deplorable state. By what happy chance Nicholas Stone's surprising work escaped it is extremely difficult to conjecture. One toe is broken off, and the conflagration has just swept across the surface of the urn. Otherwise, the whole work is in a condition of surprising sharpness and freshness. Even the delicately carved features are without a scratch.

The statue is one which displays the merits of Nicholas Stone in a high degree. It is immensely superior to the conventional Elizabethan or early Jacobean sculpture, which is not uncommon in our churches. The entire figure is swathed in thin, flat drapery, partly obscuring the forms, but not destroying them. In the long curved folds of it we see the results of Stone's training under De Keyser in Amsterdam, but the general effect of the drapery is classical and refined. The substance is Italian statuary marble, not of the finest sort, which was not easily to be obtained in London ; but, in spite of one or two awkward veins, it is not a bad specimen. In the general design of the sculpture a certain swathed smoothness has been aimed at. Nothing projects ; even the features, though sharply and realistically cut, are kept as little salient as possible. The beauty of the work lies in the exquisite head, which the light in the cathedral makes it, unfortunately, rather difficult to examine. The curious way in which the pointed moustache is drawn away, so as to show the lips, is noticeable ; doubtless this was a peculiarity of Donne's appearance. There is a greater refinement in the nose and eyes, a more aristocratic and yet sensitive look, than the painted and engraved portraits suggest. The head of the statue in St. Paul's is

at once the most artistic and the most attractive presentation of Donne which has come down to us.

Mr. Hamo Thornycroft, R.A., points out to me what only an expert would observe, that although the statue is erect, as we know it was intended to be, yet that the drapery is studied, as the direction of the fall of the folds shows, from a recumbent model. This is easily to be comprehended, however, since Nicholas Stone, although he had known Donne well and was familiar with his countenance, worked on this occasion, not from life, but from a drawing by an unnamed "choice painter." Of that drawing, the engraving of the bust, which served as the frontispiece of *Death's Duel* in 1632, seems to be the only surviving record. The drawing became the property of Henry King, who lent it to Dr. Montford, when the latter gave the commission to Nicholas Stone. The sculptor notes in his account book: "In 1631 I made a tomb for Dr. Donne, and set it up in St. Paul's, London, for the which I was paid by Dr. Montford the sum of £120. I took £60 in plate in part of payment." Stone paid his carver, Humphrey Mayor, £8 "for finishing the statue for Dr. Donne's monument." It was placed "within the choir in the south aisle, against the south-east pier of the central tower of St. Paul's; and it stood in a niche of black marble, which was surrounded by a square marble tablet, hung with garlands of fruit and leaves, having over it the arms of the Deanery impaling Donne."

Of the personal appearance of Donne we possess various other testimony. In his early days vivacity and grace had marked his movements; this developed with advancing years into a noble gravity. Hackett tells us of his youth that "it was impossible that a vulgar soul should dwell in such promising features"; Lord Falkland, looking back on his old age, recalled a countenance like the face of Moses praying for his people. His features awed and fascinated those who approached him, they had "so primitive a look, such gravity." He was of moderately tall stature; "of a straight and equally-proportioned body, to which all his words and actions gave an inexpressible addition of comeli-

ness." Every one seems to have been struck by the incomparable grace of his gestures and delivery. Even the irreverent Jasper Mayne records—

"I have seen thee in the pulpit stand,  
Where we might take notes from thy look and hand,  
And from thy speaking action bear away  
More sermon than some teachers used to say ;  
Such was thy carriage, and thy gesture such,  
As could divide the heart, and conscience touch ;  
Thy *motion* did confute, and we might see  
An error vanquisht by *delivery*."

His elegant intensity was recollected in the next generation as the type of good pulpit taste, and as the thing most diametrically opposed to the cushion-thumping of the Sons of Zeal.

Donne's natural temperament, as the reader of the foregoing pages is well aware, was melancholy. He was subject to sudden fits of dejection, and to a general depression and emptiness of spirit when alone, or after wearying excitement. But he was equally prompt in recovery, and after one of these "down" moods, he would radiate life and light about a dazzled and bewitched society. "His company was one of the delights of mankind," we are told, and he was of that rare order of men from whom sparks and scintillations are struck by the hammer of congenial conversation. Sadness and joy were balanced in him, both to excess, and so lightly hung that he passed in a few moments from one to the other. He possessed the drawbacks of his temperament; he did not endure bores easily; he had a volatile and whimsical way of relieving himself from social weariness which gave offence to the dull and to the slow; he accuses himself of what we should never have accused him, idleness and a hasty judgment. But he was a priest in the temple of friendship. Admirable as a father and a husband, he was still more inimitable as a friend, and of Donne it might be said, what Edward FitzGerald said of himself, that "his friendships were more like loves."

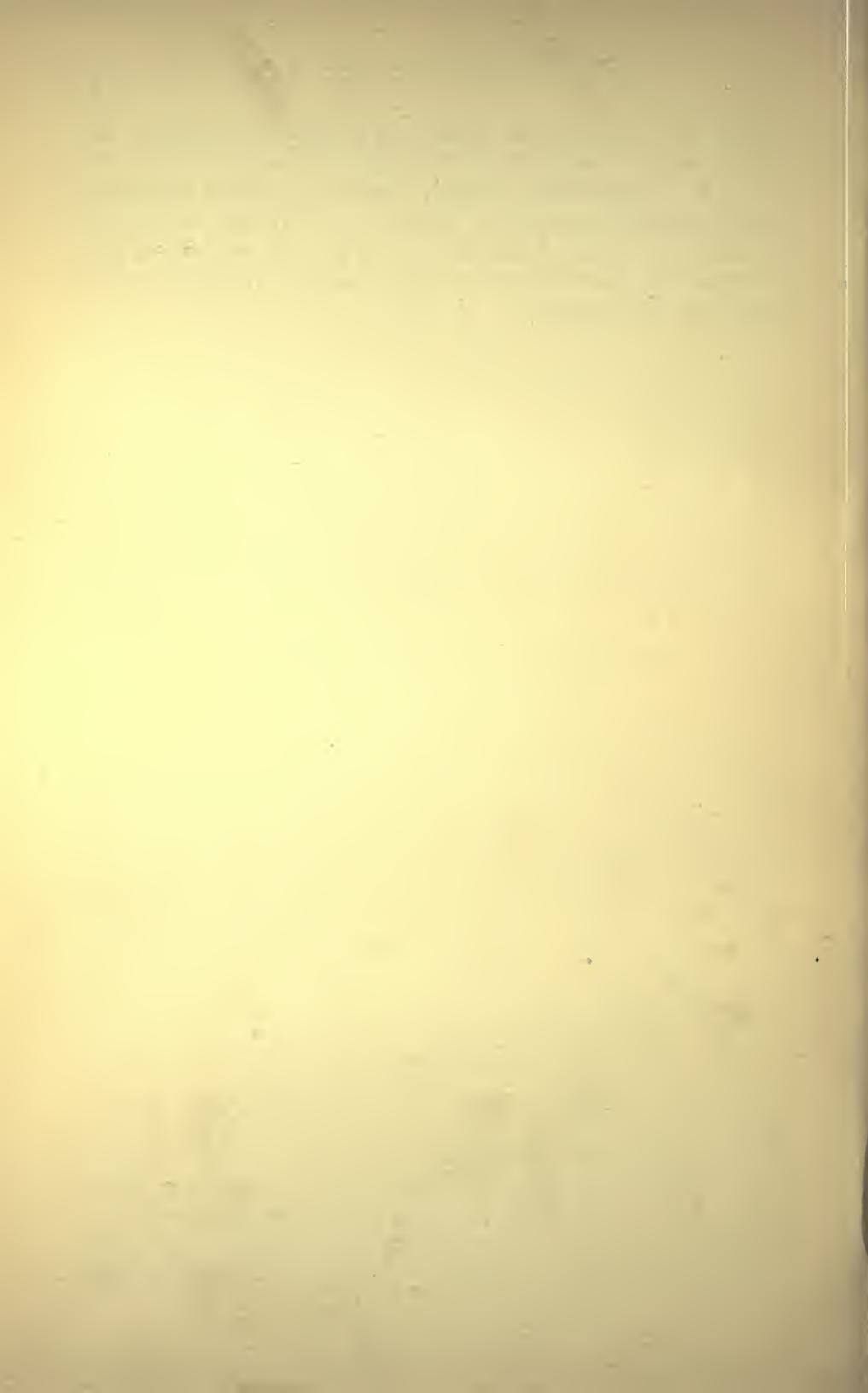
Donne was "by nature highly passionate, but more apt

to relent at the excesses of it." According to Walton, "his melting eye showed that he had a soft heart, full of compassion ; of too brave a soul to offer injuries, and too much a Christian not to pardon them in others." "His aspect was cheerful, and such as gave a silent testimony of a clear knowing soul, and of a conscience at peace with itself." We see, in his letters, indications of a certain personal timidity, a fluttering dread of results and future conditions, such as often accompanies an abnormal development of the imagination. Passion, with him, was a matter of extraordinary and exhausting intensity ; we are always conscious of the leap and throb of "the naked thinking heart" which he presses beneath his trembling fingers. He seems to have betrayed his emotions in the colours of his face, flushing and paling with the violence of feeling, a characteristic to which Arthur Wilson may refer in his hideous couplet—

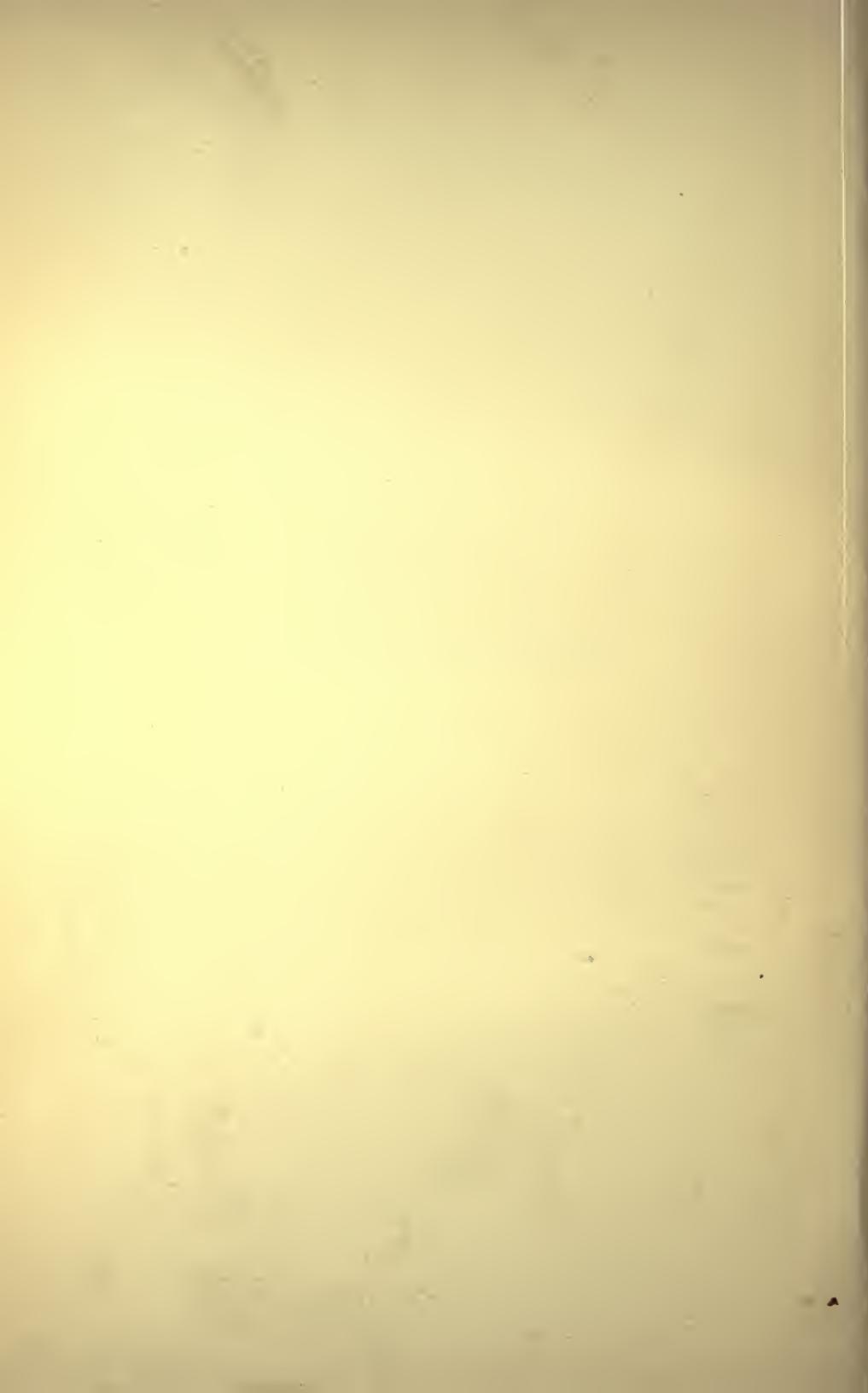
"Thy flesh, whose channels left their crimson hue,  
And whey-like ran at last in a pale blue."

And so we leave him, surely the most undulating, the most diverse of human beings, as Montaigne would say. Splendid and obscure he was, in the extreme versatility and passion, the profundity, the saintliness, the mystery of his inscrutable character. No one, in the history of English literature, as it seems to me, is so difficult to realise, so impossible to measure, in the vast curves of his extraordinary and contradictory features. Of his life, of his experiences, of his opinions, we know more now than it has been vouchsafed to us to know of any other of the great Elizabethan and Jacobean galaxy of writers, and yet how little we fathom his contradictions, how little we can account for his impulses and his limitations. Even those of us who have for years made his least adventures the subject of close and eager investigation must admit at last that he eludes us. He was not the crystal-hearted saint that Walton adored and exalted. He was not the crafty and redoubtable courtier whom the recusants suspected. He was not the prophet of the intricacies of fleshly feeling

whom the young poets looked up to and worshipped. He was none of these, or all of these, or more. What was he? It is impossible to say, for, with all his superficial expansion, his secret died with him. We are tempted to declare that of all great men he is the one of whom least is essentially known. Is not this, perhaps, the secret of his perennial fascination?



## POSTHUMOUS ACTIVITY



## CHAPTER XVI

### POSTHUMOUS ACTIVITY

THE death of Donne was evidently foreseen, and his pulpit was soon filled. Already, a week after the event, one of his intimate friends was appointed his successor. On the 8th of April, the King wrote to Laud, now Bishop of London, and to the Chapter of St. Paul's, that "That Church being destitute of a principal minister by the decease of Dr. Donne, late Dean of St. Paul's, the King hath appointed for supply thereof Thomas Winniff, D.D., and Dean of Gloucester."<sup>1</sup>

The Dean's mother, after the death of her third husband, Mr. Rainsforth, had come to live with her son in the Deanery of St. Paul's. She was still an unbending Romanist. It is probable that when Donne was obliged by his health to go down to Abrey Hatch in the autumn of 1630, he took with him his mother and left her there on his final return to London. At all events, after his death, she appears to be in the charge of her grandchildren, Samuel and Constance Harvey. Donne stated, just before his death, that "it hath pleased God, after a plentiful fortune in her former times, to bring my dearly beloved mother in decay in her very old age," and he was therefore careful to leave her comfortably provided for, the money to be used for her maintenance and divided among Donne's children after her death. That event was now not long delayed, for Elizabeth Rainsforth was buried at All Hallows, Barking, in Tower Street, on the 28th of January 1632. She must have been over ninety years of age.

Of Donne's principal patrons, his excellent friend the Earl of Carlisle was, during the Dean's last illness, appointed

<sup>1</sup> Domestic State Papers.

Groom of the Stole and First Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the King, but this was the latest of his many promotions. He was beginning to fail in health, and on the 25th of April 1636 he died. The Earl of Kent lived until the 21st of November 1639. The Earl of Dorset, who was of a younger generation, long survived his friend. He was Lord Chamberlain through the dark years of the Civil War, and he lived until the 17th of July 1652. Sir Robert Ker underwent several violent vicissitudes. On the 31st of October his eldest son, William Ker, was created Earl of Lothian, and in 1633, to raise the father to a like honour with the son, Donne's old friend and correspondent was made Earl of Ancrum. The rebellion reduced him from ostentatious wealth to extreme poverty. He remained a faithful royalist and fled to Holland, where, in Amsterdam, he died in wretched conditions about Christmas 1654. His dead body was seized for debt, some months after its burial. Later than all these, Elizabeth, the luckless Queen of Bohemia, lived on until the 13th of February 1662.

George Herbert was buried at Bemerton on the 3rd of March 1633, having imitated, after a gentle fashion of his own, his master's dramatic manner of dying, singing to his lute on his death-bed "such hymns and anthems as the angels and he now sing in heaven." Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter, having been transferred to Norwich, was ejected in 1644, and retired to his house at Heigham, where he died on the 8th of September 1656. Bryan Dupp, who asserted his right to clanship in the Tribe of Ben, by contributing a poem to *Jonsonus Virbius* in 1637, was one of the nine bishops who survived to see the Restoration. In 1660 he was promoted from Salisbury to Winchester, and died in his palace at Richmond on the 16th of March 1662. Dupp's funeral sermon was preached by Henry King, Bishop of Chichester, by whom the tradition of Donne's friendship was carried on till the 30th of September 1669. On the death of her troublesome husband, Mrs. Cokain retired to her property at Ashbourne, and remained there until her death on the 29th of August 1664. Dr. Simeon Foxe resided in the House of the College of Physicians in

Amen Corner, until he died on the 20th of April 1642. He cultivated a romantic tenderness for St. Paul's Cathedral, spent money on the preservation and creation of its memorials, and left instructions for his body to be buried there, close to the monument of the famous Dr. Linacre. Izaak Walton long outlived all other acquaintances of Donne, dying at Winchester on the 15th of December 1683 in his ninety-first year. Among his bequests was a copy of "Dr. Donne's Sermons, which I have heard preached and read with much content."

Of Donne's children, for all of whom he made careful and equal provision, John alone attained any measure of notoriety. His adventures will presently be recounted. George, who was a prisoner of war when his father died, returned and married, for the baptism of a daughter of his is recorded in the parish register of Camberwell, on the 22nd of March 1638. The date of his death is unknown.<sup>1</sup> Nicholas, the poet's third son, probably died in infancy. Of Constance, no more is known than has been already recorded. Bridget, who had been born on the 12th of December 1609, married, at Peckham, about 1633, Thomas Gardiner of Burstowe, the son of Sir Thomas Gardiner of Camberwell. She had a child born on the 7th of March 1634. In 1633 Margaret Donne married Sir William Bowles, and died on the 3rd of October 1679, at Chislehurst, where she was buried in the church porch. Finally, Elizabeth, who was not fifteen when her father died, on the 18th of May 1637 married Cornelius Laurence, Doctor of Physic at All Hallows, Barking.<sup>2</sup> No son of the poet's sons is known to have reached maturity.

It has been seen, by those who have followed this narrative, that during his life Donne published scarcely anything in verse, and comparatively little in prose. The *Pseudo-Martyr* of 1610 and the *Devotions* of 1624, with five or six separate sermons, were the most important of his publications in life. But he left behind him voluminous and highly notable works in MS., and we have now to

<sup>1</sup> Can he have been the George Donne who addressed poor copies of verses to Ford, Jonson, and Massinger?

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix F.

endeavour to trace the fate of these. Some, which impressed the mind of the seventeenth century, would add little to our entertainment to-day, if they were preserved. We cannot pretend that we are eager to read "the resultance of 1400 authors, most of them abridged and analysed with his own hand"; it is even probable that we have not lost much in the "divers Cases of Conscience that had concerned his friends, with his observations and solutions of them." But all his poems, his letters to his numerous and distinguished acquaintances, his disquisitions and his sermons, carefully scheduled and docketed, "all particularly and methodically digested by himself,"—these we tremble to think may, through the years 1631 and 1632, have hung on the verge of extinction.

For, singularly enough, no one seems to have been left in charge of these, the most precious of all Donne's possessions. His elaborate Will, in none of its dispositions, makes the smallest reference to the MSS. They came, doubtless, under the general charge of the executors, Dr. Henry King and Dr. John Montford. On the other hand, we are told in a statement made a very long while afterwards by King, that Donne, on his death-bed, three days before his decease, presented all his religious MSS.—sermons, notes, and "resultances"—to King to do what he liked with, professing before Dr. Winniff, Dr. Montford, and Izaak Walton, that it was at King's "restless importunity" that Donne had prepared them for the press. There follows, in the Bishop of Chichester's letter to Walton, a cryptic utterance: "How these were got out of my hands, you, who were the messenger for them, and how lost both to me and yourself, is not now seasonable to complain." It has been suspected that these MSS. were kept by Dr. King in a cabinet, and that John Donne the younger stole them. In the Will which that individual drew up in 1662 he wrote:—

"To the Reverend the Bishop of Chichester I return the cabinet that was my father's, now in my dining-room, and all the papers which are of authors analysed by my father; many of which he hath already received with his

Common Place book, which I desire may pass to Mr. Walton's son, as being most likely to have use for such a help when his age shall require it."

Of all this we may make what we can; but although John Donne the younger died at the end of January 1662, and although his Will was published on the 23rd of February of that year, neither Henry King, who lived until 1669, nor Walton, who survived until 1683, makes any mention of the recovery or possession of Donne's MSS. There was some unaccountable delay in the production of the Dean's posthumous writings. Nothing was printed in 1631, and for 1632 we have only the little quarto of *Death's Duel*, his last sermon, with the ghastly engraving of the author as he posed for the painter in his winding-sheet.<sup>1</sup> This sermon is one of the most curious fragments of theological literature which it would be easy to refer to, even in the works of Donne. It takes as its text the words from the 68th Psalm: "And unto God the Lord belong the issues of death." In long, stern sentences of sonorous magnificence, adorned with fantastic similes and gorgeous words, as the funeral trappings of a king might be with gold lace, the dying poet shrinks from no physical horror and no ghastly terror of the great crisis which he himself was to be the earliest of those present to pass through. "That which we call life," he says, and our blood seems to turn chilly in our veins as we listen, "is but *Hebdomada mortium*, a week of death, seven days, seven periods of our life spent in dying, a dying seven times over, and there is an end. Our birth dies in infancy, and our infancy dies in youth, and youth and the rest die in age, and age also dies and determines all. Nor do all these, youth out of infancy, or age out of youth, arise so as a Phœnix out of the ashes of another Phœnix formerly dead, but as a wasp or a serpent out of a carrion, or as a snake out of dung."

There is not much that we should call doctrine, no pensive or consolatory teaching, no appeal to souls in the modern sense, in this extraordinary address. The effect aimed at is that of horror, of solemn preparation for the

<sup>1</sup> See Gosse: *Gossip in a Library*, pp. 59, 60.

advent of death, as by one who fears, in the flutter of mortality, to lose some peculiarity of the skeleton, some jag of the vast crooked scythe of the spectre. The most ingenious of poets, the most subtle of divines, whose life had been spent in examining Man in the crucible of his alchemic fancy, seems anxious to preserve to the very last his powers of unflinching spiritual observation. The Dean of St. Paul's, whose reputation for learned sanctity had scarcely sufficed to shelter him from scandal on the ground of his casuistical apology for suicide, was familiar with the idea of Death, and greeted him in his latest public utterance as a welcome old friend whose face he was glad to look on long and closely.

At the end of *Death's Duel* are printed the earliest of the encomiastic copies of verse which it presently became the fashion to shower on the tomb of Donne. These are anonymous, but were written respectively by Dr. Henry King and Dr. Edward Hyde. We may confidently suppose that *Death's Duel* was published under King's supervision. Where at this time was the poet's eldest son? Of this, exact evidence is wanting, but we know that he, about six-and-twenty years of age, had for nearly ten years past been a resident of Christ Church, Oxford, and was a master of arts. The curious incident which was to revolutionise his life did not occur until a few months later; but I am inclined to think that the theft of his father's papers from the custody of King took place in 1632. It may be conjectured that he found King dilatory, and even disinclined to risk the publication of Donne's works, and it is conceivable that, with intentions not entirely discreditable, he determined to take his father's reputation into his own hands. John Donne the younger was not a worshipful person, but there is no evidence of any kind forthcoming which points to want of veneration for his father's genius.

It would be unjust, however, to lay to the charge of John Donne the publication of his father's *Juvenilia*. The history of this issue is entirely mysterious. Some one got hold of certain puerile writings of the late Dean's, and contrived to persuade Sir Henry Herbert to license them,



Corporis hec Animæ sit Syndon Syndon Iesu  
Amen

2 B Scup. And are to be sold by R. R. and Ben: ffister



in the autumn of 1632. The little book was already printed when the Bishop of Lincoln, applying to the King, obtained an injunction in Star Chamber. Sir Henry Herbert was asked to give his reasons for "warranting the book of Dr. Donne's paradoxes." What happened next is not certain, but early in 1633 Henry Seyle, an obscure publisher, whose shop was at the Tiger's Head in St. Paul's Churchyard, issued a shabby pamphlet in quarto, entitled *Juvenilia, or certaine Paradoxes and Problems written by J. Donne*. We have spoken in an earlier part of this work of the truncated appearance of this little book. The "Paradoxes" are eleven, as against twelve in the authorised edition of 1652, and the "Problems" ten as against seventeen. When John Donne the younger ultimately edited these, and other trifles of his father's youth, he ignored the existence of the two editions of *Juvenilia* of 1633, and there can be no doubt that they were piratical.

No one who honoured Donne, or had any regard for his memory, would have opened the series of his writings with these idle little essays in casuistry. That they were genuine is not to be questioned, but they belong to his gay and flippant youth. We shall scarcely be in danger of error if we date their composition before 1600, for they belong to the unregenerate times of his intellect no less than of his soul. In the "Paradoxes" he takes some absurd statement, such as that old men are more fantastic than young ones, or that only cowards dare to die, and endeavours by casuistry to prove it true. The "Problems" have the air of being more mature compositions than the "Paradoxes." In them, Donne takes a question of vulgar tradition or of proverbial error, and examines it, faintly in the manner exemplified a generation later, with far closer science, by Sir Thomas Browne in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*. Thus Donne discusses "Why is Venus-star multinominous, called both Hesperus and Vesper?" and "Why there is more variety of green than of any other colour?" On this species of idle trifling the learned youth of the reign of Elizabeth were wont to expend their superabundant intellectual spirits. They might, perhaps, have been worse

employed, for they were sharpening the arrows of their wit on these vain exercises, and, after all, as La Rochefoucauld was presently to remark, “l'étude est le garde-fou de la jeunesse.” But the publication of *Juvenilia* could not enhance the reputation of the dead Dean of St. Paul's.

It was very different with the next instalment of his posthumous writings. Few publications have had a stronger influence in controlling and guiding the current of public taste than the quarto volume of *Poems by J. D.*, which was issued by John Marriot from his shop in St. Dunstan's Churchyard in 1633, but entered upon the Stationers' Registers on the 13th of September of the preceding year. The care of Donne's son, and the researches of later editors, have added to the treasures contained in this book; but, speaking broadly, Donne lies here revealed to us in full as a poet, and if we had no more than is contained in these four hundred pages, his place in our literary evolution would not be modified. The quarto of 1633 is the nucleus round which our criticism of Donne has to crystallise, and the history of the volume, therefore, possesses extreme interest. Unfortunately it has remained no less extremely obscure. Who produced it? Who supplied the materials? By whom, if by any one, was it authorised and corrected for the press? To these questions there are no positive replies forthcoming. It has been customary to take for granted that the responsibility lay with the younger John Donne. The latest and best of Donne's commentators roundly complains of “the carelessness with which [Donne's Poems] were tossed into the lap of the public by his unworthy son.” For this, I confess, I am unable to discover one iota of evidence.

As in the case of Henry Seyle and the *Juvenilia*, so in the case of John Marriot and the *Poems*, John Donne the younger does not seem to have been consulted. The preface—“to the Understanders”—is not signed by him, but by the printer, by whom seems to be meant, not M. F., the compositor, but John Marriot, the bookseller for whom the job was done. The publication of the volume was delayed because the censor was doubtful whether he could pass the

Satires and certain of the Elegies, but at length these were allowed to be printed. What Marriot's exact authority was it is impossible to say, but it is proper to point out that there could be no difficulty whatever in procuring a text of Donne's poems which should be fairly correct so far as it went, and yet surreptitious. It is not too much to suppose that a dozen such MSS., several of which have survived to the present day, were circulating among men of letters when Donne died, and each of these, it is probable, had given birth to a cluster of more or less full copies. The wonder is, not that the edition of 1633 contains some errors and some doubtful numbers, but that it should be, on the whole, as remarkably authoritative as it is. It is very inexact to say that, as posthumous editions of Jacobean poets go, it is particularly careless.

That John Donne, the younger, was not concerned seems to follow from a document which has several times been printed, "the humble petition of John Donne, Clerk," to Archbishop Laud in 1637. This is, as I take it, the younger Donne's first attempt to assert his own authority over his father's writings, and in order to facilitate his own recognition, he repudiates all that has hitherto been done. He speaks of "many scandalous pamphlets printed and published under [Donne's] name, which were none of his, by several booksellers, without any leave or authority." The last clause was doubtless in part correct; the statement that the "pamphlets" were none of Donne's was a rather barefaced lie, for the writer goes on to enumerate. These so-called scandalous piracies included the *Juvenilia*, which the younger Donne himself printed as his father's in 1652, the *Ignatius his Conclave*, which had appeared in his father's lifetime, and the quarto of 1633, which he calls "certain poems by the said John Marriot," but which, when at last, in 1650, he obtained possession of, he freely acknowledged to be the genuine work of the great Dean of St. Paul's.

Meanwhile, John Marriot's introduction offers certain points of interest. He demands for these posthumous verses the very loftiest homage. "This is not ordinary,"

he warns his readers, "the Understanders." He is prepared to maintain, in the country of Chaucer, of Spenser, of Shakespeare, of Jonson, that this is the best book of verses "that ever this kingdom hath yet seen, and he that would doubt of it must go out of the kingdom to inform himself, for the best judgments within it take it for granted." Marriot hints that he has been forced to publish the poems rather prematurely, before he has had time to complete or correct the text, because else there would have been a foreign piracy, "it would have come to us from beyond the seas." He is evidently aware that he will be judged too hasty, but he declares that his publication "hath the best warrant that can be, public authority and private friends," a boast the first clause of which seems incompatible with the injunction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, when his notice was drawn to the existence of the book in 1637. But the help of "private friends" Marriot undoubtedly had, for a cloud of witnesses testify at the close of the volume.

Of these "Elegies upon the Author," too, those by King and Hyde have been already mentioned; there were also encomiastic copies of verses by Thomas Browne (afterwards omitted), by Richard Corbet, Henry Valentine, Izaak Walton, Thomas Carew (or Carey), Sir Lucius Carey, better known as the great Lord Falkland, Jasper Mayne, Arthur Wilson, Richard Braithwayte, and Endymion Porter. These were the men in early middle life who formed the advanced guard of Donne's poetical reputation; this was the elder generation of his pupils and inflamed admirers. The forms which their scholarship and admiration took must be reserved for a later chapter; it is here necessary only to point out that our analysis of these names will show that Marriot had the support of the men who represented the *cultus* of Donne with most dignity in 1633. Ben Jonson's fine lines, "The heavens rejoice in motion," should have come here, but they were delayed until the edition of 1650.

When we closely examine the quarto of 1633, we observe that, interesting and valuable as it is, it leaves

many signs of amateur editing. The poems are thrown together without any attempt at intelligent order; neither date nor subject nor relation is in the least regarded. The text offers some very puzzling peculiarities; in some poems its variations, from that adopted from 1635 onwards, are not only numerous but bewildering, since it is difficult to be sure which is genuine Donne and which is not. Sometimes it is possible that both readings are correct. In 1633 we read (in "Love's Growth")—

" But mixed of all stuffs *paining* soul or sense  
 And of the sun his *working* vigour borrow,  
 Love's not so pure *and abstract* as they use  
 To say, which have no mistress but their Muse."

In 1635, and onwards, this appears—

" But mixed of all stuffs *vexing* soul or sense  
 And of the sun his *active* vigour borrow,"

and in 1669—

" Love's not so pure *an abstract*."

In these and many other similar cases, I am inclined to believe that the later version is Donne's original text, and the MS. used in 1633 is one revised by himself. "Vexing" was doubtless changed to "paining" to avoid the assonance with "mixed," and "working" gives the poet's meaning more accurately than "active." But against this theory, it is only right to urge the fact that in many cases the text of 1633 obviously blunders from sheer lack of intelligence in the copyist or the editor. There are very few pieces here, however, which it is now known that Donne did not write, the main exception being Basse's famous epitaph on Shakespeare, which slipped in in 1633,<sup>1</sup> but was detected at once, and never appears as Donne's again. At the end of the poems there are printed eight letters addressed to Sir Henry Goodyer, and here and elsewhere in the volume are found prose addresses to the Countess of Bedford and to Sir

<sup>1</sup> Page 149 of the Quarto.

Robert Ker. Finally, there may be quoted a "Hexastichon Bibliopolæ" from the pen of John Marriot himself—

"I see in his last preached and printed book,  
His Picture in a *sheet* ; in Paul's I look  
And see his statue in a *sheet* of stone ;  
And save his body in the grave hath one,  
Those *sheets* present him dead ; these if you buy  
You have him living to eternity."

Meanwhile, the theological writings of Donne were neglected. But in this same year (1633) there was published in London a little volume, *The Ancient History of the Septuagint . . . newly done into English by J. Done*, which has commonly been included among the works of the Dean of St. Paul's, and was probably supposed to be his in the seventeenth century. This was a translation of the work "written in Greek by Aristeus 1900 years since, concerning the first translation of the Holy Bible by the Seventy-two Interpreters." Aristeus, or Aristeas, was an envoy of Ptolemy Philadelphus in the third century before Christ, on whom was fastened a spurious treatise on the composition of the Septuagint. The translator's preface, signed "John Done," speaks of "this small but ancient history, which this last summer I made part of my exercise to put into an English habit"; but this preface is undated. The authorship of Donne, however, is absolutely negatived by a reference towards the end of this highly pedantic and unreadable treatise to "this present year, 1633." It is certain that *The Ancient History of the Septuagint* has no right to appear in catalogues of the works of the Dean of St. Paul's.

During Donne's lifetime, all his occasional religious writings had been published by Thomas Jones. It is strange that, after his death, the name of this highly respectable bookseller, who must have been in close relation with the Dean for many years, never appears on one of his title-pages again. In 1634, the University Press at Cambridge began what seemed likely to be a series of Donne's sermons. First of all *Two Sermons preached before*

*King Charles* appeared; then four others, each separately. Perhaps these quarto pamphlets had little sale, for in the same year (1634) the identical sheets were bound together and issued with a general title, *Six Sermons, upon several occasions, preached before the King, and elsewhere: by that late learned and reverend divine, John Donne*. There does not seem to have been much encouragement for these addresses, and the University Press went no further in its laudable attempt at a sort of periodical publication of Donne's theological works.

The sale of the *Poems* had been very extensive, and already in 1635 another edition was called for. This was a much prettier book, a small octavo, with a portrait engraved by William Marshall from the picture painted in 1591. Izaak Walton contributed below this portrait his enthusiastic lines—

“ This was, for youth, strength, mirth, and wit, that time  
Most count their golden age—but 'twas not thine.  
Thine was thy later years, so much refin'd  
From youth's dross, mirth, and wit; as thy pure mind  
Thought, like the angels, nothing but the praise  
Of thy Creator in those last, best days.  
Witness this book, thy emblem, which begins  
With love, but ends with sighs and tears for sins.”

The poems were entirely re-assorted, with some attempt at propriety of arrangement; as Walton indicates, the love poems were brought to the beginning, the divine pieces massed at the end. A number of spurious poems, however, were allowed to creep into this edition, which has even less authority than that of 1633, but is valuable as containing between twenty and thirty pieces, some of them of considerable importance, which were not known to the earlier editor. The publisher is still John Marriot, but whom he employed to carry out all the drastic alterations in the text, or how he secured the new pieces, we do not know; Izaak Walton, however, now for the first time comes forward, and we shall probably not make any serious mistake if we suppose him to have been the revising editor. It was doubtless he who addressed to John Marriot, in 1635, this

“hexastichon incerti,” in evident rivalry with that printed by the bibliopole himself—

“In thy impression of Donne’s Poems rare  
For his eternity thou hast ta’en care ;  
’Twas well, and pious ; and for ever may  
He live ; yet show I thee a better way ;  
Print but his sermons, and if those we buy,  
He, we, and thou shall live to eternity.”

No one, however, at present felt moved to take this hint, and to preserve the theological writings of Donne, which were to remain untouched for five years longer. The behaviour of Henry King in this particular is most unaccountable. It was he who had painfully insisted that Donne should prepare his sermons for the press ; it was in his hands that they were solemnly laid by the dying preacher ; he it was who had been named executor in the lost codicil to Donne’s will, largely, one would suppose, for the protection of those MSS. Yet, through all these years, King is obstinately silent, and when at length the *Sermons* of 1640 appear, we are unable to discover that he has anything to do with the tardy act of their publication.

John Donne, the younger, then for the first time appeared on the bibliographical scene. He had been the hero of a very ugly adventure, for the fullest account of which we are indebted (of all people !) to Archbishop Laud, at that time Chancellor of the University of Oxford. The younger Donne, who was now a student of Christ Church, was riding home to college in the early days of August 1634, in company with another student of the house, when a little boy called Humphrey Dunt, eight years of age, jumped in the street and startled the horse of Donne’s companion. They were almost home, for the accident happened opposite the noble old mansion of Wolsey, called St. Old’s (St. Aldate’s). Donne, who had a highly irascible temper, struck the little boy four or five times about the head with his whip. The child seemed none the worse at the time, but soon began to complain of pains in the head ; eight days afterwards he took to his

bed, and a fortnight after that he died. The scandal was great, and John Donne was accused of the manslaughter of little Humphrey Dunt. He was arrested, and on the 26th of August 1634 he was legally tried before the Understeward of the University, Ureton Crooke; he was acquitted in consequence of the vagueness of the medical evidence, for two surgeons and a physician attested that they could not certify to any particular cause of death, as there was no appearance of hurt anywhere.

John Donne, however, although acquitted of this grave offence, felt it desirable to quit Oxford for a while, and proceeded to Padua, where he took the degree of D.C.L. Late in 1637, the scandal having blown over, he came back to England, and one of his first acts seems to have been to attempt to recover, or to assume, a right over his father's posthumous works. He called upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the petition of which we have already spoken, to forbid the further sale of the *Poems*, of the *Juvenilia*, and of the *Ignatius his Conclave*, which John Marriot had discovered and had reprinted in 1635. Laud responded as follows:—

“I require the parties whom this petition concerns not to meddle any further with the printing or selling of any pretended works of the late Dean of St. Paul’s, save only such as shall be licensed by public authority and approved by the Petitioner, as they will answer contrary at their peril. And this I desire Mr. Dean of the Arches to take care.

W. CANT.

“Dec. 16, 1637.”

Without doubt, the power of the ecclesiastical courts to suppress publications was now greatly reduced. It was no longer what it had been half a century earlier, when Drayton’s *Harmony of the Church* disappeared before an episcopal injunction like a handful of hay in a furnace. No human being seems to have given the slightest attention to this order of Laud’s, and not only did the 1635 edition of Donne’s *Poems* go on selling, but in 1639 a third

issue appeared, still in Marriot's hands, and containing only few and unessential alterations. It may be conjectured that John Donne had used the injunction, not to suppress the books or divert them from free circulation, but to assure himself a share in the profits.

At length, in 1640, the reputation of the celebrated divine, so long neglected, was avenged by the publication of what was perhaps the most eminent collection of religious addresses printed in the first half of the seventeenth century. The *LXXX. Sermons preached by that learned and reverend Divine, John Donne, Dr. in Divinity, late Dean of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, London*, is a handsome folio of more than eight hundred pages. In a letter, printed now for the first time, Donne tells an anonymous correspondent, on the 25th of November 1625, that he has been employing his constrained leisure, during his retreat at Chelsea from the plague, in the collecting of his sermons. He says: "I have revised as many of my sermons as I have kept any note of, and I have written out a great many, and hope to do more. I am already come to the number of eighty, of which my son, who, I hope, will take the same profession, or some other in the world of understanding, may hereafter make some use." The importance of this statement is obvious. It shows us that the *LXXX. Sermons* of 1640 had been prepared for future publication by the author in 1625, and had received from his hand full and leisurely revision. It shows, moreover, that the Dean regarded his son John as his probable editor in the future, and it relieves that son from any charge of interfering in matters which did not concern him. By the light which this important discovery gives us, we may see that the *Sermons* of 1640 is of all the posthumous writings of Donne the one which bears upon it the strongest seal of textual authenticity, and we may accept with confidence all the autobiographical touches which its headings supply. Would that they were fuller and more abundant!

The folio has, besides its regular title-page, an engraved title by Merian, with a reproduction of the portrait of

Donne, with full beard and moustache, painted in 1615; this gives us the courtier just newly transformed into the divine. The book is dedicated by the younger Donne to King Charles, acknowledging the especial favour vouchsafed to the author by his Majesty, and "so many indulgent testimonies of your good acceptance of his services." The editor states that Archbishop Laud, "the person most entrusted by your Majesty in the government of the Church, and most highly dignified in it," has encouraged him to publish these sermons. As John Donne the younger has been somewhat cruelly treated by successive biographers, it seems only fair to say that in this rather dignified preface he speaks of his father's theological work with perfect decorum, commanding to the notice of the King its "devotion," its "moderated and discreet zeal," its "deep-seated knowledge," its "strict" and "charitable doctrine." John Donne the younger is a dog who has got a bad name; that he was not a man of delicacy in his private life must be admitted, but there is no sense in denying to him the possession of every natural virtue.

He was, indeed, at this time, posing as a very virtuous and contrite being. I have not been able to discover the exact date of his ordination, but he seems to have taken orders at the age of thirty-four, in 1638. On the 30th of June of that year he was re-incorporated in the University of Oxford, with the degree of D.C.L. accredited to him from Padua. He began to look out for preferment in the Church, and with success. The King presented him to the rectory of High Roding in Essex on the 10th of July 1638, and to the rectory of Fulbeck, in Lincolnshire, on the 10th of June 1639. But, already a fortnight before the latter appointment, he had been beneficed in the diocese of Lincoln, having been presented to the rectory of Ufford, in Northamptonshire, by the patron. He was, therefore, promptly and well provided for, and might, but for the Civil War, have risen to high preferment in the Church. The exceedingly decorous tone of his dedication of the volume of 1640 to the King is evidently an acceptance of the rôle of a dignified and rising churchman.

An indication of the general enthusiasm roused by the publication of these *Sermons*, by far the most brilliant of that age, may be gathered from a letter which has been preserved, addressed to the younger Donne by Dr. John Towers, Bishop of Peterborough:—

“*To JOHN DONNE.*

“SIR,—You have sent me a treasure, and I would not spare time to tell you so, till I had somewhat satisfied the thirst I had to drink down many of those excellent sermons, which I have so long desired. And by this I have the advantage, that I can know what I thank you for, though I could presumptuously value them by the rest of his which I have heard and read formerly—for I think I have all those that in the press did forerun these—yet by this time I can sensibly acknowledge to you how great cause so many of us have to thank you. How well may your parishioners pardon your silence to them for awhile, since by it you have preached to them and their children’s children, and to all our English parishes for ever. For, certainly, many ages hence when they shall be made good, or confirmed in goodness, by studying your father, they shall account those times primitive in which he preached, and you will then, if not now, be in danger to lose your property in him. He will be called a Father of the Church.

“Sir, though this book, with his former printed sermons, be a great stock to the Church, from one man, yet if you shall please to perform the trust of a good executor, there is, I presume, a great remainder of his legacy, which, when you have taken breath, we must call you to account for in a Court of Equity. Though you may think this will abundantly satisfy, yet believe it, Sir, it will but increase our appetite. We shall give you time, Sir, by no general release, yet his God and yours assist you, to whose blessing I commend you, and am, Sir,

“Your very friend in Christ Jesus,

“JO. PETERBOROUGH.

“Peterborough, July 20, 1640.”

The *LXXX. Sermons* would have been quite enough, if they stood alone, to give the Bishop of Peterborough the measure of Donne's genius as a preacher. We have already commented on the manner of their composition, but it is perhaps desirable to remind the reader that what is here put before him is not an exact transcript or even report of what Donne said in the pulpit. He was essentially an extempore preacher, a fact which must increase our admiration of the elaboration of thought, richness of illustration, and copious repertory of learning which dazzled and delighted his hearers. He carried with him to the pulpit, it is true, very full and systematic notes, and we know not in how far these amounted to a skeleton of the sermon. It seems certain, however, that he took no MS. to church with him, and left none at home, but that when he determined to write out a sermon, he did it afterwards, embroidering the rough outline of his address with such beauties of oratory as he remembered to have used on the spur of the moment, or now reflected that he might have used. He depended, without question, greatly upon his memory. It will be recollected that when Sir Henry Goodyer asked him for a copy of one of his sermons, some time after the delivery of it, Donne replied, "I will pretermit no time to write it, although in good faith I have half forgot it."

No one living has given to the study of Dr. Donne's sermons so close an attention as Dr. Jessopp. I am glad, therefore, to be permitted to quote his judgment of the position they hold in Jacobean theology. The opinion of Dr. Jessopp is the more valuable because it is fortified not merely by a peculiarly loving study of Donne as a divine, but by an acquaintance with the minute developments of seventeenth-century theology in England which is probably unrivalled. He writes:—

"As a theologian, Donne occupied a middle position between the two extreme parties among the clergy, whose differences were becoming daily more pronounced, and their attitude more hostile towards each other. On the burning questions of the ceremonies and the sacraments, he was

emphatically a High Churchman, outspoken, uncompromising, definite, though gentle, sympathetic, and animated by a large-hearted tolerance. But in his treatment of Holy Scriptures no Puritan of them all insisted more frequently upon the inspiration of every syllable in the Old Testament and the New. With far less of that trifling with his hearers, which is too frequently the blemish in Bishop Andrewes' sermons, Donne's interpretations occasionally startle us by their grotesqueness; they are the outcome of his almost superstitious *bibliolatry*, if this modern phrase may be allowed. It was this, however, which gained for him the ear of the trading classes, and the confidence and popularity which never left him. Both parties in the Church claimed him as their own. . . . It was this many-sidedness that attracted the thoughtful and devout to listen to the message he came to deliver. He spoke like one who had studied and prayed out the conclusions he arrived at; men felt they could leave themselves in the hands of a preacher, who was no partisan."

That the publication of the *LXXX. Sermons* had been so long delayed appears to have arisen from the fact that a biography of the author had been promised, as introductory matter, by the celebrated Provost of Eton, Sir Henry Wotton. This would have offered a signal attraction to the buyers of the folio, and it is not to be wondered at that Marriot was willing to wait for it. In December 1639, however, Wotton died, and when the publisher inquired for the Life of Donne, behold, it had never been written. The exact conditions under which Donne and Wotton had cultivated that life-long friendship, of which Walton tells us, are curiously obscure. In point of fact, were it not for Walton's repeated assurances, we should not be aware that they had been more than the merest acquaintances. They were at Oxford together, indeed, but Wotton was five years the senior of Donne, an interval which at that early age presents an almost insuperable bar to familiar intercourse. When Donne arrived in London, as a youth of nineteen, Wotton had already departed on his nine years' wandering through Europe, in the process of

which it is of course possible, though never suggested by Walton, that Donne may for some time have been his companion. He returned to England when Donne was just about to ruin his own prospects by a marriage which forced him to retire to the country; and before Donne reappeared in London, Wotton had once more withdrawn to Italy, where, after the accession of James I., he was appointed Ambassador at Venice. He remained in Italy until 1624, when he returned to England, and was appointed Provost of Eton, in which college he was residing when Donne died. It is therefore demonstrable that any close companionship between these two men was impossible at every juncture of their lives. They can but have met occasionally and for brief periods. If, therefore, they cultivated so warm and constant a friendship as Walton reports, it must have been through the medium of correspondence. But no letters of Wotton to Donne have been preserved, and very few of Donne to Wotton.<sup>1</sup> We must therefore take Walton's word for the existence of an intimacy of which almost all external evidence is lost. What Walton says (or said in 1640, for he afterwards touched up his remarks) was as follows:—

“Betwixt [Sir Henry Wotton] and the author [of the *LXXX. Sermons*] there was so mutual a knowledge, and such a friendship contracted in their youth, as nothing but death could force a separation. And, though their bodies were divided, that learned knight's love followed his friend's fame beyond the forgetful grave.”

Wotton testified to this affection by undertaking to write Donne's life, and he applied to Izaak Walton to collect materials for him. “I,” says Walton, “did prepare them in a readiness to be augmented, and rectified by his powerful pen” (1640). In 1658 he added that he did “most gladly undertake the employment, and continued it with great content, till I had made my collection ready.” We may easily reconstruct what happened in this matter. Sir Henry Wotton, a very magnificent amateur, with whose

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Horatio Brown has had the kindness to search the archives at Venice for traces of Donne's correspondence, but without the smallest success.

literary and piscatory recreations Walton was proud to be associated, remarked how welcome would be a life of their illustrious friend, the deceased Dean of St. Paul's; whereupon, Walton urged the Provost to oblige the world with Donne's life "exactly written." Wotton, who shrank delicately from the printing-press, would hesitate, and yet admit the attractiveness of such a proposal; and would at last say that, if Walton could obtain for him the material facts—their "bodies" having been "divided"—he would give the matter his best consideration. Walton thereupon set about gathering data together and setting down his recollections—many of them, doubtless, already submitted to paper—and Wotton was satisfied to find Walton so zealous. Of course, when the Provost of Eton died in 1639, no traces of his Life of Donne were forthcoming. Wotton was the most elegant of amateurs, but he was essentially an amateur.

It has been customary to lament that Wotton was prevented from carrying out his design. On the contrary, we ought to rejoice that he did not, by the preparation of a vapid eulogy in the customary renaissance manner, interfere with the production of Izaak Walton's exquisite little masterpiece. There is nothing in the *Reliquiae*, nothing in the sparse miscellaneous writings of Wotton, to indicate that at any part of his life he had possessed the unusual gifts required by a biographer; nor must it be forgotten that, when Donne died, Sir Henry, a wearied and asthmatical man, was already advanced in years. His irresolution in carrying out literary schemes was constitutional; he had proposed to himself a Life of Martin Luther, a complete Manual of Architecture, a History of the Reformation in Germany, and many other projects. He was the prince of those busy men of diplomacy who are always hankering after a life of lettered repose, and who, when they secure it, know not how to employ it.

Accordingly, Marriot was disappointed of his promised life of Donne, and was regretfully preparing to publish the *LXXX. Sermons* without one, when Izaak Walton stepped in:—

"When I heard," he says in 1640, "that sad news, and likewise that these sermons were to be published without the author's life, which I thought was rare, indignation or grief, I know not whether, transported me so far that I reviewed my forsaken collections, and resolved the world should see the best picture of the author that my artless pencil, guided by the hand of truth, could present to it."

The happy result was that the folio *LXXX. Sermons* contains as its introduction what is called "The Life and Death of Dr. Donne," signed Iz : Wa : This original title, "the Life and Death," is worthy of notice; it emphasised a fact which has been since neglected and forgotten, that Walton's monograph expressly deals with the divine life and exemplary death of the Dean, and ought not to be considered as an attempt at a literal picture of his transition through all his ages. It is wilfully and purposely drawn out of focus, the early physical part carefully attenuated, the life of holiness that culminated in a glorious death being no less carefully expanded and emphasised. We do no injustice to Walton in insisting upon this fact, for he would have been the first to acknowledge and to justify it. This "Life and Death" of 1640 has never, I believe, been reprinted. It was presently corrected and much expanded by the author, and cannot, of course, compare in authority with the accepted version; still, it has its points of critical and biographical interest.

Such was the inception of one of the most exquisite studies in biographical eulogy which the English language possesses, and thus began the series of five matchless Lives, which have been, and will remain, the delight of successive generations. In the present biography, attention has had so frequently to be drawn to little details as to which Walton was inexactly informed, that it is a pleasure for the author to find here an opportunity of expressing without stint his devotion to the beautiful genius of Walton. Poets and critics of every class have united to praise these exquisite monographs, but no one has qualified the charm

of their author more exactly than Wordsworth (in the *Ecclesiastical Sketches* of 1822)—

“ There are no colours in the fairest sky  
 So fair as these. The feather, whence the pen  
 Was shaped that traced the lives of these good Men,  
 Dropped from an Angel’s wing. With moistened eye  
 We read of faith and purest chastity  
 In Statesman, Priest, and humble Citizen.  
 O, could we copy their mild virtues, then  
 What joy to live, what blessedness to die!  
 Methinks their very Names shine still and bright  
 Apart—like glow-worms in the woods of spring,  
 Or lonely tapers shooting far a light  
 That guides and cheers—or seen like stars on high,  
 Satellites burning in a lucid ring  
 Around meek Walton’s heavenly memory.”

The Civil War disturbed, although it did not quite put a stop to, the circulation of Donne’s posthumous works. Between 1639 and 1649 the *Poems*, although they had by this time taken a recognised and even foremost place in the imaginative literature of the age, were not reprinted. Most of Donne’s immediate friends and disciples were on the losing side, although it is only fair to say that he seems to have had admirers as warm among Roundheads as among Royalists. During the war, the younger John Donne passed through many vicissitudes, and was deprived of his benefices. He complained to Philip Herbert, in 1644, that ever since the beginning of the campaign, “ my study has been often searched, all my books, and almost my brains, by their continual alarms, sequestered for the use of the Committee.” He demanded protection against two classes of monster, men that cannot write and men that cannot read. He left the diocese of Lincoln and came up to live in a London house in Covent Garden. It was at this time that he published his father’s treatise on self-homicide, to which we have already devoted considerable attention. There is no date on the title-page of the original edition, but Rushworth authorised its publication on the 20th of September 1644. The title-page is curiously circumstantial in explaining that *Biahanatos* was

“written by John Donne, who afterwards received Orders from the Church of England, and died Dean of St. Paul’s, London.” It was “published by authority,” in quarto, at the price of three shillings. This is perhaps the most precisely edited of all Donne’s posthumous works, and does credit to his son’s care.

That the younger Donne should have published the *Biathanatos* at all has provoked great indignation. Dr. Jessopp, who has a violent prejudice against the younger Donne, says that “disregarding his father’s wishes, with characteristic brutality, he made merchandise of the MS.” This is forcible, but somewhat excessive. I see no particular “brutality” in the act, and as to “his father’s wishes,” these had been expressed with an obscurity almost Jesuitical. “Publish it not, yet burn it not; and between those do what you will with it,” Donne had said in 1619 to the nobleman who was now the Earl of Ancrum. “It was a book written by Jack Donne,” he explained, “and not by Dr. Donne.” But the author had been very careful to preserve it in several copies, and now that so much of the indiscreeter work of “Jack Donne” had been given to the world, was it still incumbent to withhold the *Biathanatos*? Perhaps it was, and yet I cannot persuade myself to be so very indignant with the younger Donne.<sup>1</sup>

There followed a period of five years during which literature was almost silenced by the Civil War, but, immediately upon the beheading of Charles I., the vogue of Donne became reanimated, and the publication of his writings recommenced. There was a reprint of the *Poems* in 1649, with the two *Coryat* pieces introduced, and another, of a much more ambitious order, in 1650. Young John Donne now, for the first time, takes his father’s poems under his personal protection, and he dedicates the collection to

<sup>1</sup> A trifling bibliographical fact connected with the first edition of the *Biathanatos* may be recorded here. My own copy, which is in very fresh condition, in the original shape, has preserved the paper label with which the publisher sent it out, bearing the printed letters BIAΘANATOΣ arranged perpendicularly. Mr. S. Arthur Strong, whose familiarity with libraries is unrivalled, tells me that this is the earliest example he has met with of a printed paper label on an English book.

William Craven, who had been created First Lord Craven of Hamstead-Marshall in 1627. Lord Craven, a little, learned, active man of extraordinary energy, had been at Oxford with the younger Donne, and was but a few months his junior. The 1650 (the fifth) edition of the *Poems* is notable for including at last Ben Jonson's fine address—

“Donne, the delight of Phœbus and each Muse,  
Who, to thy one, all other brains refuse;  
Whose every work, of thy most early wit,  
Came forth example and remains so yet,”

and for containing a section entitled “Divers Copies never before in print.” In other respects it is identical with the 1649 edition, and seems to be struck off from the same type.

John Donne the younger was by this time attached to Basil Fielding, second Earl of Denbigh, as chaplain. The following entry occurs in the *Lords' Journal* :—

“Wednesday, 14th June 1648.—Upon reading the petition of Doctor John Donne, Chaplain to the Earl of Denbigh, who is arrested contrary to the Privilege of Parliament, it is ordered: That it is referred to the Committee of Privilege to consider whether said Doctor Donne be capable of Privilege of Parliament or no, and report the same to this House.”

The first Lord Denbigh had died of his wounds in the war in 1643. It was his widow, Susan, the sister of Buckingham, who protected Crashaw when he was ejected, and who was converted to Rome by that poet's ministrations. Donne's patron was her son, the second earl, who had finished his education at Padua, where Donne doubtless had “spent many years with him, and in that so famed commonwealth of Venice,” whither, as Lord Feilding of Newnham-Paddox, he had been sent by Charles I. in 1634. Donne says that “in a season so tempestuous, it is a great encouragement to see your Lordship called to the helm,” and there can be no question that the preferment of the Earl of Denbigh must have been a matter of high satisfaction to his persecuted chaplain. The “helm” in question was the Speakership of the House of Lords, to which Den-

bigh was elected on the 14th of December 1648. To this nobleman, "my very good Lord and patron," Donne dedicates the second instalment of his father's theological work, the *Fifty Sermons* of 1649, a folio awkwardly styled "The Second Volume," although it matches neither in size nor form with the *LXXX. Sermons* of 1640.

In his improved circumstances John Donne made himself very active. In 1651 he placed in the hands of Marriot a collection of *Essays in Divinity*, of which he had found "an exact copy, under the author's own hand," among his father's papers. They formed a little duodecimo of 224 pages, after having been eked out with some prayers, which, by internal evidence, seem to belong to other periods of Donne's life. The editor stated that these *Essays* "were the voluntary sacrifices of several hours, when [the author] had many debates betwixt God and himself, whether he were worthy and competently learned to enter into Holy Orders." This narrows the date of their composition to December 1614 and January 1615. On the whole, the *Essays in Divinity* form the least exhilarating of Donne's published works. They have not the subtlety of his controversial writings, the magnificent variety and volume of the sermons, nor the intense self-revelation of the *Devotions*. The first essay has a certain importance in reference to his attitude in taking Orders, but after this the personal mood is entirely submerged in a succession of exceedingly perfunctory and uninteresting exercises, mainly on disputatious points arising out of the study of portions of the Old Testament. There is a remarkable absence of all adornment of style, and, in fact, I believe these little studies to be, in the main, mere notes for future sermons. We occasionally come upon felicities of diction which reveal the author. Probably Donne was the only man in England who would have spoken of "the great patriarchal Catholic Church, of which every one of us is a little chapel," or who, when threatened with the absence of worthy auditors in a country parish, would have replied, "I shall be content that oaks and beeches be my scholars, and witnesses of my solitary meditations."

A formal declaration of Anglican faith, dated, as we see, at the moment when Donne, at the advanced age of forty-two, was taking Orders, possesses a biographical value, and may be here detached from the dull little book in which it lies buried :—

“ In my poor opinion, the forms of God’s worship, established in the Church of England, are more convenient and advantageous than [those] of any other kingdom, both to provoke and kindle devotion, and also to fix it that it stray not into infinite expansions and subdivisions, into the former of which churches utterly despoiled of ceremonies seem to me to have fallen, and the Roman Church, by presenting innumerable objects, into the latter. And though, in all my thanksgivings to God, I ever humbly acknowledge as *one of His greatest mercies to me that He gave me my pasture in this park, and my milk from the breasts of this Church*, yet out of a fervent and, I hope, not inordinate affection even to such an unity, I do zealously wish that the whole Catholic Church were reduced to such unity and agreement in the form and pro-established in any one of these churches, though ours were principally to be wished.”

With these fragmentary Essays are joined several private devotions, printed in a different type and evidently belonging to different periods. Of the prayer which I conceive to have been written at the time of Donne’s final conversion, I have already given an account. Another very beautiful supplication appears to have been in use among his family on private occasions. These exhaust, I believe, the elements of interest in the *Essays in Divinity*, an extremely rare little book, which was never reprinted during more than two centuries, and is now with difficulty attainable even in the solitary re-issue of 1855.

At the close of the *Essays in Divinity* there was introduced an advertisement to the effect that “ now in the press and to be printed ” was a *Fasciculus Poematum et Epigrammatum Miscelaneorum Authore Johanne Donne (sic), D.D.* ” “ Englished by Jasper Maine, Doctor in Divinity.” This was the fraudulent collection of spurious pieces in Latin, of which repeated mention has been made. Had these verses

been genuine, they would now have been at least sixty years old. Here, it is to be observed, the Latin originals seem to be promised, but they were not vouchsafed. What eventually appeared was a duodecimo pamphlet of eight leaves called *A Sheaf of Miscellany Epigrams*, and announced to be "translated by J. Main, D.D." But enough has probably been said, in earlier pages of these volumes, about this exasperating and not very important piece of mystification, the exact history of which we shall perhaps never know. These forged epigrams of Jasper Mayne's, of which, I suspect, no Latin originals ever existed, were added to the 1652 edition of Donne's minor prose works, put together by his son, and dedicated to Francis, Lord Newport of High Ercal. The preface is a pretty piece of writing, and as the volume which contains it is very rare and has never been reprinted, it may be desirable to quote here that part of it which exposes John Donne's estimation of his father's *Paradoxes, Problems, Essays, and Characters* :—

"I humbly here present unto your Honour, things of the least and greatest weight that ever fell from my father's pen, which yet are not so light that they seem vain, nor of such weight that they may appear dull or heavy to the reader.

"The primroses and violets of the spring entertain us with more delight than the fruits of the autumn; and through our gardens we pass into our groves and orchards, preserving and candying the buds and blossoms of some trees, admitting them amongst our delicacies and sweet-meats, wheras the riper fruit serves only to quicken and provoke our appetite to a coarser fare.

"These are the essays of two ages, when you may see the quickness of the first, and the firmness of the latter. If they could present to your Lordship the youth and beauty of Helen, or the courage and strength of Hector, they could not have found a more proportionable patron, either to caress the one or encounter the other, you being both Atossa and Cassius too."

At this time there were two simultaneous Lords New-

port, an earl and a baron, a Blount and a Newport. Donne's patron was the second of these, a man famous for his handsome face and carriage. When the younger Donne signed his dedication, from his house in Covent Garden, on the 2nd of March 1652, Lord Newport had succeeded to the title just one year. Very late in the century he was created Earl of Bradford, and he lived on to the age of eighty-eight, dying in 1708, perhaps the very last survivor of those who had been in any way personally connected with Donne.

In 1651, John Donne put together in a quarto volume of 318 pages the *Letters to Several Persons of Honour*, written by his father. He prefaced it by a very interesting portrait of the poet at the age of forty, engraved by the Parisian artist, Peter Lambart, who was born in the year in which the picture was painted, and could never have seen Donne in the flesh. This is a vigorous and suggestive piece of portraiture. We have already spoken of the *Letters* of 1651, which have indeed formed the foundation of the present publication. No such important work was ever thrown upon the world in a more slovenly way, or with less regard for the feelings of the future biographer or editor. There is no attempt made to arrange the letters upon any system; they appear to have been flung into the book, as into a basket, and left to take care of themselves. In the majority of instances, the date is omitted altogether; when it is given it is often erroneously copied. Even the names of the persons to whom the letters are addressed are sometimes obviously wrong. It is true that Donne had a trick of omitting these data on whimsical occasions; but nine times out of ten the blanks in the edition of 1651 are matters of pure carelessness. It is doubtless owing to the obscurity and confusion with which these delightful documents are massed together that, even in this age of reprints, no one has ever reissued the *Letters* of Donne, which is now a rather uncommon book.

The *Letters* did not find any large sale, and in 1654 the sheets were rebound, with a fresh title-page, and issued as a new edition, although there was nothing new about it. In this same year, J. Flesher, who had taken over some of

Marriot's business, produced a sixth edition of the *Poems*, in which there is nothing to note, except a binder's blunder by which the Epistle Dedicatory and Ben Jonson's Epigram have dropped out.

The last of Donne's separate writings to see the light in the seventeenth century was the *XXVI. Sermons* of 1661, issued as the Third Volume of Donne's Sermons. This was dedicated by the younger Donne to Charles II., as a gift on his Restoration, a payment to Cæsar of things due unto Cæsar. The Editor dared to make this statement as to the earlier history of his work :—

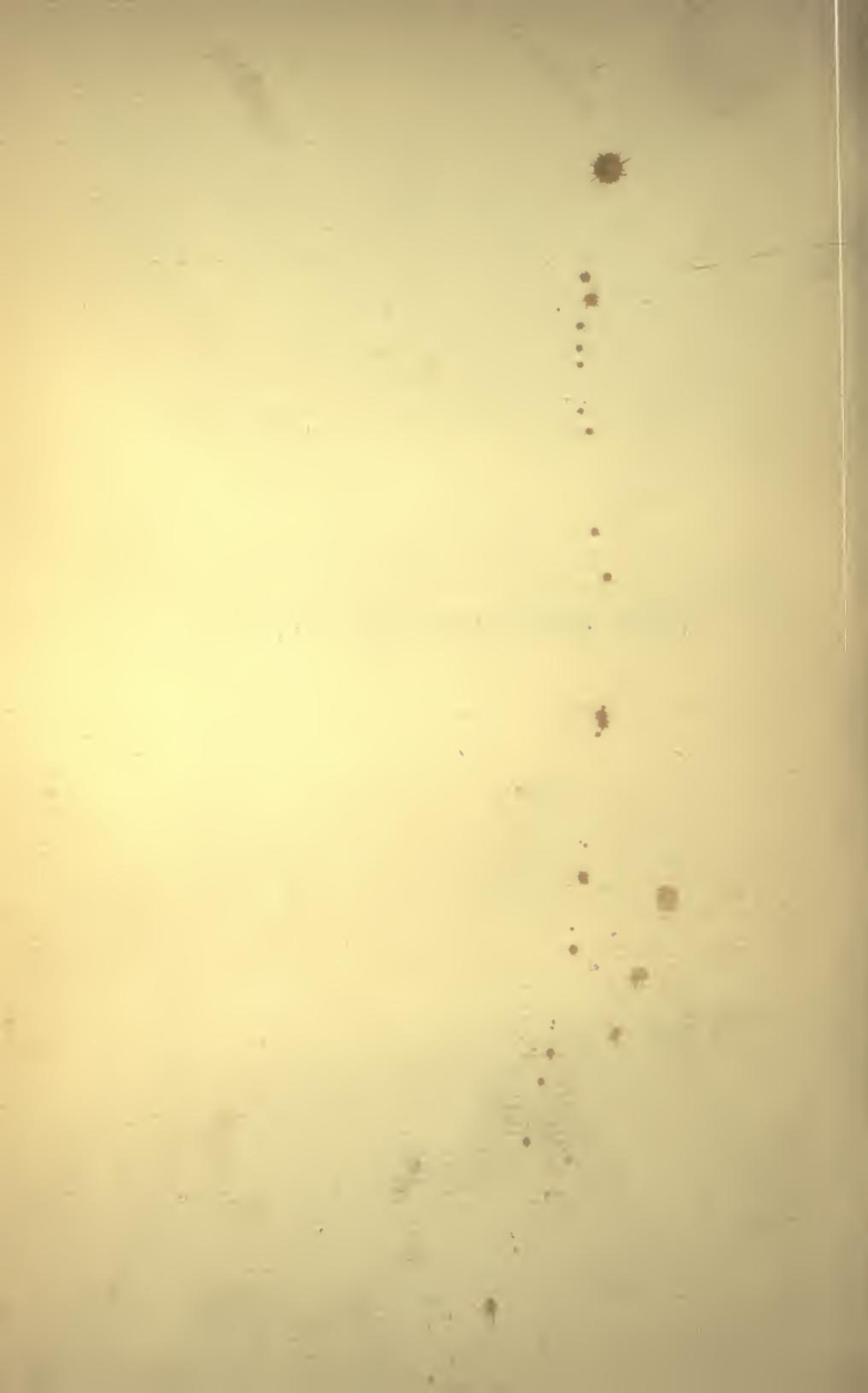
“Upon the death of my father, Dr. Donne, sometimes Dean of Paul's, I was sent to by his Majesty, of blessed memory, to re-collect and publish his sermons; I was encouraged by many of the nobility, both spiritual and temporal, and indeed by the most eminent men that the kingdom then had, of all professions, telling me what a public good I should confer upon the Church, and that by this means I should not only preach to all the parishes of England, but to those whose infirmities did not suffer them to come to their own churches at home. But, above all, I was encouraged by the example of St. Paul, who, though he took wages of other Churches, and yet served the Corinthians, thought himself excusable in that he was always doing service to the Church of Christ.”

Our wish is to deal as gently as may be with the character of John Donne the younger, but no doubt he was a sad liar. We may question whether this enthusiastic paragraph contained a single statement which was not definitely untrue. That he should make these representations while the Bishop of Chichester and Izaak Walton were still alive, shows, however, that the younger Donne was amply provided with moral courage. Of the *XXVI. Sermons* a small edition, only 500 copies, was printed, and it is now a much more-uncommon book than its predecessors. In it, all but three of the sermons are carefully dated; they mainly belong to the earlier part of Donne's London labours, before he was made Dean.

Little remains to be added to the original history of

Donne's posthumous works. A seventh edition of the *Poems*, published in 1669, is of considerable value. It contains several new poems, and the entire text has been carefully revised, evidently by collation with an MS. copy not known to previous editors. This sufficed to satisfy the admirers of Donne, a rapidly dwindling congregation, until exactly half a century later, in 1719, when was published by Tonson the eighth and last early edition of the *Poems*, with a Life and a Portrait. It may be suggested as probable that Tonson was encouraged to undertake this publication by Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, who was one of the last belated admirers of Donne in the age of Anne. He it was, supported by the Duke of Shrewsbury, who, somewhere about 1717, commended the *Satires* of Donne to the revising hand of Pope and Parnell. Pope's conventionalised paraphrases of Donne appeared anonymously in 1733, and more fully in the quarto volume of Pope's Works in 1735.

THE INFLUENCE OF DONNE



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE INFLUENCE OF DONNE

IN examining the remarkably wide and deep, though almost entirely malign, influence of Donne upon the poetry of this country, it is necessary first of all to dwell on the complete intellectual isolation of his youth and middle age. The Elizabethan poets were, as a rule, a sociable and sympathetic body of men. They acted and interacted upon one another with vivacity; they met at frequent intervals to encourage themselves in the art they exercised and to read each other's verses. The habit which sprang up of contributing strings of complimentary effusions to accompany the published efforts of a friend was symptomatic of the gregarious tendency of the age. So, even, were the fierce feuds and noisy, rather than envenomed, encounters which periodically thrilled the poetic world. It was not hatred, so much, or even jealousy, which inspired these famous battles, as the inevitability that in a society, the atoms of which hustled about so rapidly in the immediate neighbourhood of the rest, collisions should occasionally occur. In the last years of Elizabeth and the first years of James, London swarmed with poets and poeticules, and each of these was, more or less, in personal relation with the others.

Herein lies the first peculiarity of Donne. After the juvenile concession to the taste of the hour, implied in his *Satires* of 1593 and onward, he gave no further hostages to the fashion. Nor do we find that he paid any attention to the leaders of literature whom it was inevitable that he should meet at Court or in the taverns. At no period even of his youth does he seem to have been impressed by the fame of his English compeers, to have felt admiration

or even curiosity in their work. One is left with the impression that Donne would not have turned to see Edmund Spenser go by, nor have passed into an inner room at the Mermaid to listen to the talk of Shakespeare. His was the scornful indifference of the innovator, the temperament of the man born to inaugurate a new order of taste. It is instructive to take the parallel case of Michael Drayton. Born ten years earlier than Donne, he was already famous as one of the foremost lyrists and sonneteers of the age before Donne sailed to Cadiz. The subsequent lives of the two men were coincident, and they died almost together; they were buried, as it were, in unison, the one in Westminster Abbey, the other in St. Paul's. Drayton had been peculiarly identified with the household of Donne's most intimate friend, Sir Henry Goodyer. In these parallel conditions we expect to find the younger man brought into enforced relations with the elder. It is not so; in all his verses and letters, in all his correspondence with Goodyer, Donne never lets drop the slightest allusion to the existence of the active and affable Drayton. He probably regarded him, as a typical writer of the old school, with contempt; and when the reputation of the author of the *Poly-Olbion* was at its height, he doubtless never turned a page of it, except to criticise the engraved maps.

The absolute ignoring of Drayton might be the result of some personal repulsion, for the conversation of Drayton was not, especially in later years, to every one's taste. But when we find Donne at the court of the Countess of Bedford at Twickenham, forced to move in the constellation of her attendant poets, and yet never mentioning one of them, we are struck by his austere and contemptuous silence. In Lady Bedford's gardens he must constantly have walked beside the gracious and affable Samuel Daniel, her poet laureate, if not, as is believed, the King's also. In Daniel there should have been everything to attract and nothing to repel the spirit of Donne. High thoughts, a spare and unadorned diction, a distinguished intellectual grace, were the central attributes of the beautiful and gentle spirit who bewailed a mortal Delia and listened to Ulysses and the

Siren. But Donne's arrogant silence is unbroken. Daniel, with his smooth measures and his classic imagery, belonged to the old Elizabethan school, with which Donne, as a metrical iconoclast, would have neither part nor lot. It seems as though the poetry inspired by the renaissance passion for beauty, the poetry written by Spenser and Shakespeare, and continued by a hundred tuneful spirits down to Shirley and Herrick, was to Donne a meat offered to idols. He carried his fierce nonconformity in his heart, and he would not sit at table with the heathen Spenserian and Petrarchist.

To this separatism there was one exception. To a solitary writer in verse of the age of Elizabeth, Donne is civil; one such writer afforded to Donne so much attention as the veriest poetaster readily received from his masters and betters. Ben Jonson was not isolated in the sense that Donne was; but he too was out of sympathy with the age into which he was born; he fretted in its silken and tinselled fetters, and desired to break away from the melody and the pastoral sweetness. With the sturdy, rugged genius of Ben Jonson there is no question but that Donne enjoyed a certain imperfect sympathy. For Jonson he once deigned to write, in Latin it is true, a copy of complimentary verses. To Jonson he occasionally refers in the language of esteem. To Jonson he paid the compliment of addressing one of his angriest diatribes against fortune and the popular mind. No doubt Donne shows little vital interest in Jonson's poetical experiments, but yet his slight references to the Masques and his compliment to *Volpone* vastly outweigh all that can be brought together from every source to prove his interest in the remainder of his contemporaries.

Ben Jonson, on the other hand, was cordially drawn to the severe and repellent Donne, who could be so charming in the world, and was so cold and scornful to all his brother-poets. In the austerity of Donne, Jonson recognised a quality sympathetic to his own roughness. He recognised too, no doubt, a superior strength of contumely in Donne. Jonson could not prevail upon himself to be silent; he must rail out and lash the age with his tongue and pen;

must even, so they say, snatch a pistol from a bad poet like Marston, "and beat him, too." To Jonson, after one of his rattling *boutades*, the stately, scornful impassibility of Donne must have seemed highly enviable. Here was a poet who thought that everything was being written on a false principle, with corrupt taste, and who yet never strove nor cried. Accordingly, when Donne was still obscure in fame and fortune, we find Ben Jonson fascinated by him. "You cannot believe," Jonson says, "how dear and reverend your friendship is to me." He signs himself Donne's "ever true Lover"; he dreads no greater penalty than "the loss of you, my true friend, for others I reckon not." For Donne's good opinion, Jonson was eager; in his approach he adopts a most unwonted humility. He submits his poems to Donne—

"Read all I send, and, if I find but one  
Mark'd by thy hand, and with the better stone,  
My title's seal'd."

He claims for his friend supremacy as critic alike and as creator—

"Who shall doubt, Donne, if I a poet be,  
When I dare send my epigrams to thee,  
That so alone canst judge, so alone make?"

We receive an interesting indication of the growth of Donne's reputation from Drummond of Hawthornden's report of the conversations the friends had about poetry when Ben Jonson came to stay with Drummond in 1619. Jonson speaks, over and over again, as though Donne were a poet whose works were as familiarly known to his interlocutor as those of any of his various published contemporaries. Yet Donne had at this time printed practically nothing except *An Anatomy of the World*. Obviously, the MSS. of his poems were by this time in wide circulation, and had reached Scotland. As a matter of fact, some of them are among the Hawthornden papers to this day. When, therefore, Drummond records that Ben Jonson "esteemeth John Donne the first poet in the world in some

things," he may be recalcitrant but he is not scandalised. That Drummond, with his French influences, and his comparative detachment from Spenser, would be prepared to regard Donne with a certain sympathy, we may safely presume. Sometimes, especially in his divine odes and madrigals, the Scotch poet approaches the manner of Donne, but always with this great distinction, that in Drummond gorgeousness of style masks an intellectual poverty, while in Donne the mental force beneath the rough mode of expression is Titanic.

Jonson was not always so favourable to his friend. If on one day he esteemed him "the best poet in the world in some things," on the next he averred that "Donne, for not being understood, would perish," and that "Donne, for not keeping accent, deserved hanging." Probably one of the greatest of calamities that has ever befallen English literature was the destruction in the fire of 1623 of the paraphrase or adaptation to English use which Jonson had made of the *Ars Poetica*. It was furnished with a multitude of notes—

"All the old Venusine, in poetry,  
And lighted by the Stagyrite, could spy,  
Was there made English."

This Art of English Poesy was in dialogue, and appears to have taken the form of a discussion between the Poet himself and Criticus, in whose mouth the precepts and opinions of Donne were placed. It would be of the highest interest to us to know how the theories of Donne struck his friend, and to have them presented to us as seen in the perspective of Ben Jonson's vigorous mind.

It is a curious fact that Jonson alone, of those who in the first half of the seventeenth century discussed the characteristics of Donne's style, commented on the peculiarities of his metre. This would seem to have filled even his fondest disciples with horror, and it is much to be doubted whether they understood the principle upon which he worked. On this point, successive critics have agreed in finding Donne an unpardonable sinner. It seems even

to be supposed by some writers that the curious condition of his early verse is due to ignorance, and that Donne did not know how to scan. As to this, I can but repeat, what I have said before,<sup>1</sup> that what there was to know about prosody was, we may be sure, perfectly known to Donne. But it is evident that he intentionally essayed to introduce a revolution into English versification. One of the main objections he took to the verse of his youth was that it was so mellifluous, sinuous, and soft. A five-syllabled iambic line of Spenser or of Daniel trots along with the gentlest amble of inevitable shorts and longs. Donne thought that the line should be broken up into successive quick and slow beats. The conventional line vexed his ear with its insipidity, and it doubtless appeared to him that his great predecessors had never completely shaken off a timidity and monotony which had come down to them from Surrey and Gascoigne. It is possible that he wished to improve on the rhymed verse of Spenser, as Shakespeare had improved on the blank verse of Sackville.

The curious ruggedness of the *Satires* and *Elegies* becomes comprehensible only when we adopt some such theory I have suggested. Part of Donne's iconoclasm consisted in his scorn of the flaccid beat of the verse of the sonneteers. He desired greatly to develop the orchestral possibilities of English verse, and I have remarked that the irregular lyrics of Mr. Robert Bridges and the endless experiments of the Symbolists in France are likely to be far more fruitful to us in trying to understand Donne's object, than any conventional repetition of the accepted rules of prosody. The iambic rhymed line of Donne has audacities such as are permitted to his blank verse by Milton; and although the felicities are rare in the older poet, instead of being almost incessant as in the younger, Donne at his best is not less melodious than Milton. One of his most famous traps for the ear, is the opening line of "Twickenham Garden," which the ordinary reader is ever tempted to dismiss as not being iambic verse at all. We have to recognise in it the poet's attempt to identify the

<sup>1</sup> *The Jacobean Poets*, 1894, pp. 60-63; from which a few lines are here reproduced.

beat of his verse with his bewildered and dejected state, reading it somewhat in this notation:—

“ Blásted | with sighs || and | surroúnded | with teárs.”

It is almost certain that this intrepid shifting about at will of the accent is a symptom of youth in the poem, that we can almost, that is to say, approximately, date any given piece of his by the degree in which this prosodical violence is sustained.<sup>1</sup> After middle-life, Donne dropped the experiment more and more completely, having found, no doubt, that his closest friends were by no means certain to comprehend what he meant by the rapid changes of the instrument; nor, in reading to themselves, could produce the effect which he had intended. These variations of cadence, then, must be looked upon as a peculiarity not essential to Donne’s style, nor persistent in it, but as a studied eccentricity of his youth. At his very best, as in

“ I long to talk with some old lover’s ghost,  
Who died before the God of Love was born,”

or as in

“ A naked, thinking heart, that makes no show,  
Is to a woman but a kind of ghost,”

there is no trace of this “ not keeping of accent,” which puzzled and enraged Ben Jonson.

His conscious isolation, no doubt, made Donne hesitate to press his poetry upon his own generation. He found its flavour, the strong herbal perfume of it, not agreeable in the nostrils of the latest Elizabethans. Neither the verse, nor the imagination, nor the attitude of soul were what people in 1600 were ready to welcome, or even to apprehend. We can imagine Donne rather wistfully saying—

“ Ho io appreso quel che, s’io ridico,  
A molti fia savor di forte agrume,”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the interesting notes scribbled in 1811 by Coleridge, in Lamb’s copy of Donne’s *Poems*, S. T. C. remarks on the judicious use Donne makes of the anapæst in iambic measures where he wishes, in the eagerness of haste, to confirm or to exaggerate emotion. This valuable copy is now in the possession of Mr. W. H. Arnold, of New York.

<sup>2</sup> *Paradiso*, xvii. 116, 117.

and this may have been a main reason why he refrained from publication. He kept his rosemary and his marjoram, his rough odorous herbs, to himself.

Among the contemporary impressions of Donne's mission as a poet, by far the most valuable which has come down to us is that contributed by the poet, Thomas Carew. As poetry and as criticism alike, his elegy on Donne is of high merit, and vastly outbalances all the rest of the more or less perfunctory pieces with which it is presented. We might not otherwise have been made aware of the acute attention paid by Carew to the reforms of Donne, nor of the influence which the latter exercised on a writer of genuine independent impulse and high talent. Carew was by a generation younger than Donne, but was the senior of both Herbert and King. We will, therefore, consider his remarks before we touch on their discipleship, because of the very definite evidence Carew gives of the way in which Donne was regarded from, let us say, 1619 (when Jonson discussed him with Drummond), onward to the end of his life. Carew in 1619 was perhaps in his twenty-fifth year; he had returned from travel in France and Italy, determined to cultivate English verse with an enthusiasm which his brilliant talent justified, and he was tired, as young men are apt to be, of hearing the favourites of their fathers' generation monotonously praised.

It is not to be questioned that at this juncture one of the MS. copies of his poems, which Donne had caused to be multiplied, fell into Carew's hands. Hitherto, Ben Jonson, in his lyrics, had been his model; it would not be true, perhaps, to say that those of Donne now or ever became Carew's model, but they excited his amazement and his curiosity. For a moment, the existing poetry of this country, from the Renaissance to the scholars of Spenser, seemed to be blotted out in a mist of admiring wonder. England had "no voice, no tune" but what Donne supplied. So, about the year 1665, to young men then just leaving college, the melodies and ardours of Mr. Swinburne seemed, for the time being, to drown and out-

dazzle the rest of poetical literature. Carew endeavours to define the extraordinary effect of the first reading of Donne's verses. He describes, rapturously,

“the fire  
That filled with spirit and heat the Delphic choir,”

at the approach of this new voice, and he proceeds, with the calmness gained by some twelve years of familiarity with this extraordinary and bewildering genius, to distinguish what it was which produced on the minds of himself and others this impression of Donne's novelty and unchallenged supremacy. In the first place, there was in Donne the note of revolt against the conventional imagery, diction, and order of ideas which had belonged to the Renaissance. This new poetry was a “fire” which “purged the Muses' garden of its pedantic weeds”—that is to say, of the time-honoured classical conventions. For servile imitation of the ancients, seen through the Italian atmosphere, Donne substituted “fresh invention.” He “paid the debts” of “the penurious bankrupt age” by exchanging for mere loans upon antiquity a new, rich, realistic poetry of endless possibilities of resource. (The reader must be most careful to observe that these are not the sentiments of comparative criticism to-day, but the convictions of the young men, of whom Carew was the clairvoyant forerunner, who marshalled themselves under Donne's banner from 1620 to 1650.)

What these young poets saw in Donne, and what attracted them so passionately to him, was the concentration of his intellectual personality. He broke through the tradition; he began as if poetry had never been written before; he, as Carew says—

“open'd us a mine  
Of rich and pregnant fancy.”

He banished the gods and goddesses from his verse, not a Roundhead fiercer than he in his scorn of “those old idols.” He wiped away “the wrong” which the English language

in its neo-pagan raptures had “done the Greek or Latin tongue.” His gigantic fancy put such a strain upon the resources of the English language, that its “tough, thick-ribb’d hoops” almost burst beneath the pressure. The earlier Elizabethan writers had been “libertines in poetry”; Donne recalled them to law and order. This is how Carew describes the extraordinary emotion caused by the first reading of Donne’s poems—

“the flame  
Of thy brave soul, that shot such heat and light  
As burned our earth and made our darkness bright,  
Committed holy rapes upon the will,  
Did through the eye the melting heart distil,  
And the deep knowledge of dark truths did teach.”

Once again, Donne has

“opened us a mine  
Of rich and pregnant fancy, drawn a line  
Of masculine expression . . .  
Thou shalt yield no precedence, but of time,”—

that is to say, the ancient poets have no advantage of originality over thee, save the purely accidental one of having been born in an earlier age.

When we turn to Donne’s poems, but in particular to his lyrics, and endeavour to find out what it was which excited these raptures of appreciation, we are at first unable to accept the seventeenth-century point of vision. Nothing is more difficult than to be certain that we value in the old poets what their contemporaries valued. Those pieces of Shakespeare which are on every tongue to-day, and excite our unbounded admiration, are not alluded to by any of his contemporaries. We have no evidence that a single friend of Milton saw what we all see in the central part of “*L’Allegro*” or in “*At a Solemn Music*.” What contemporary criticism found in Herrick was “a pretty flowery and pastoral gale of fancy, in a vernal prospect of some hill, cave, rock, or fountain.” We ask ourselves, in despair, what can the people who wrote such words have seen in “*Gather the rosebuds while ye may*,” or in “*Bid me to live*”? In

the same way, we have the greatest difficulty in constraining ourselves to regard Donne's verse from the point of view and in the light of its early, enthusiastic readers of 1620.

Perhaps we cannot do better than read over again an entirely typical poem, written towards the middle of his career, and illustrating, without extravagance, the very peculiarities which Donne's disciples admired. For this purpose, "Twickenham Garden" may serve as well as any:—

" Blasted with sighs, and surrounded with tears,  
 Hither I come to seek the spring,  
 And at mine eyes, and at mine ears,  
 Receive such balms as else cure every thing.  
 But O ! self-traitor, I do bring  
 The spider Love, which transubstantiates all,  
 And can convert manna to gall ;  
 And that this place may thoroughly be thought  
 True paradise, I have the serpent brought.

'Twere wholesomer for me that winter did  
 Benight the glory of this place,  
 And that a grave frost did forbid  
 These trees to laugh and mock me to my face ;  
 But that I may not this disgrace  
 Endure, nor yet leave loving, Love, let me  
 Some senseless piece of this place be ;  
 Make me a mandrake, so I may grow here,  
 Or a stone fountain weeping out my year.

Hither with crystal phials, lovers, come,  
 And take my tears, which are love's wine,  
 And try your mistress' tears at home,  
 For all are false, that taste not just like mine.  
 Alas ! hearts do not in eyes shine,  
 Nor can you more judge woman's thoughts by tears  
 Than, by her shadow, what she wears.  
 O perverse sex, where none is true but she  
 Who's therefore true, because her truth kills me."

If we compare this with an analogous piece of ordinary Elizabethan or early Jacobean poetry, we observe, first of all, that it is tightly packed with thought. As to the value of the thought, opinions may differ, but of the subtlety, the variety, and the abundance of mental move-

ment in this piece there can be no question. The Elizabethan poet had held a mirror up to nature; Donne (the illustration is almost his own) shivered the glass, and preserved a reflection from every several fragment. This redundancy of intellectual suggestion was one of Donne's principal innovations.

In the second place, we notice an absence of all conventional or historical ornament. There is no mention here of "cruel Amaryllis," or "great Pan," or "the wanton shears of Destiny." A rigid adherence to topics and to objects familiar to the non-poetical reader of the moment is strictly observed. This, as I suppose, was another of the main sources of Donne's fascination; he was, in a totally new and unprecedented sense, a realist. In this he revolted with success against all the procedure of the Renaissance, and is, in his turbid and unskilful way, the forerunner of modern Naturalism in English poetry. This is an aspect of his influence which has been strangely overlooked, and, no doubt, for this reason, that what was realistic in the reign of James I. seems utterly old-fangled and antiquarian in that of Victoria; so that the poetry of Donne, instead of striking us—as it did his contemporaries—as amazingly fresh and new in its illustrations, strikes us as unspeakably moth-eaten and decrepid. In this poem of "Twickenham Hill" there is even an innovation in naming, topographically, a place by its existing, modern name; and this prepares us for all the allusions to habits, superstitions, rites, occasions of the moment which occur to the rapid brain of the author.

If the poems of Donne are examined, we shall find that it is only on the rarest occasions that he draws his imagery from mythology or romantic history. He has no interest in Greek or Latin legend. He neither translates nor paraphrases the poets of antiquity. For the conventional elements of beauty, as it was understood in that age, for roses, that is to say, and shepherds, lutes, zephyrs, "Thetis' crystal floods," and "flower-enamelled meadows," Donne has a perfect contempt. He endeavours to extract intellectual beauty from purely subjective sources, by the concentration

of intensity and passion upon modern thought. Accordingly, he draws his illustrations, not from asphodel or from the moon, but from the humdrum professional employments of his own age, from chemistry, medicine, law, mechanics, astrology, religious ritual, daily human business of every sort. The decency of reticence between lovers reminds him of a sacerdotal mystery, and he cries—

“ ‘Twere profanation of our joys  
To tell the laity our love.”

Love is a spider dropped into the luscious chalice of life and “transubstantiating” it to poison. The sun is no more Phoebus, or the golden-haired son of Hyperion, but a pedantic lackey, whose duty is to “tell court-huntsmen that the king will ride.” If the poet abuses his mistress for her want of faith, he does it in the language of an attorney, and his curses are “annexed in schedules” to the document. A woman’s tear, on which her lover’s tear falls, is like a round ball, on which a skilled workman paints the countries of the world.

From the days of Dr. Johnson downwards, the nature of these images has been not a little misunderstood. They have two characteristics, which have been unduly identified—they are sometimes realistic, and they are sometimes inappropriate. To us to-day they are almost all grotesque, because they are fetched from a scheme of things now utterly obsolete; but we must endeavour to recollect that such phrases as—

“ no chemic yet the elixir got  
But glorifies his pregnant pot,  
If by the way to him befall  
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,”

or,

“ As he that sees a star fall, runs apace,  
And finds a jelly in the place,”

phrases which now call for a commentary, and disturb our appreciation of the poet’s fancy, were references to the science or half-science of the Jacobean age as modern and

“topical” as allusions to the Röntgen rays would be to-day. In less than the three hundred years which divide us from Donne’s youth, the poems of Mr. Rudyard Kipling will require a commentary five times as bulky as the text. Such is the inevitable result of indulging in the technical phraseology of the moment, and quitting the traditional basis of language.

But if many of Donne’s illustrations were appropriate enough and pointed enough in his own age, there were many which deserved from the very first the condemnation of good judges. Here it would be difficult to find better criticism than is supplied by Dr. Johnson, in his vivacious *Life of Cowley*. What he says there of the whole school is peculiarly true of Donne, and may be specially adapted to his use. “What he wanted of the sublime, he endeavoured to supply by hyperbole; his amplification had no limits; he left not only reason but fancy behind him; and produced combinations of confused magnificence, that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined.” It is the same admirable critic who observes that, if Donne was “upon common subjects unnecessarily and unpoetically subtle, yet where scholastic speculation can be properly admitted, his copiousness and acuteness may justly be admired.” He notices also, what it is necessary to emphasise in all examination of Donne’s position, a determination to dazzle and excite his contemporaries by something perfectly new, even at the expense of truth and of the sober force of beauty.

The age was perfectly ready to be thus excited and dazzled. It only asked to be conducted as promptly as possible into new and extravagant paths of fancy. Nor was this tendency to imaginative extravagance confined to England; it invaded all parts of Europe at the same moment, and in a manner so simultaneous as to baffle the critical historian. Three remarkable writers—Marini, Góngora, Donne—started this analytic and hyperbolic style at the same time, and it is very difficult to say whether either of the three was affected by the practices of the others. Although Marini is commonly spoken of as the leader and

founder of this kind of writing, his actual claim to be the master of the "metaphysical" poets is not great. Far more intellect and originality went to the making of Luis de Argote y Góngora, who was born in 1561, twelve years earlier than Donne and eight than Marini. We have seen that Donne read everything that reached England in the way of current Spanish literature, and it would remove a difficulty if we were complacently to attribute Donne's attitude to an intuitional imitation of that of Góngora. Unfortunately, as Mr. Fitzmaurice-Kelly points out, the reputation of Góngora was entirely local until, in 1605, Espinosa published his verses in the *Flores de Poetas ilustres*. To suppose that Donne had met with them in MS. before this date is to strain probability to excess. But long before 1605 the style of Donne was developed to its full limit, and moreover at that time Góngora was far from having adopted the extravagant use of metaphor and torturing obscurity which gave the *Soledades* so curious a superficial resemblance to the *Elegies* of Donne. It is therefore quite as difficult to suppose the English poet influenced by the Spanish as it would be to reverse the terms.

When we speak of Marini, the case is somewhat different. No careful student questions that the poetry both of Spain and England was affected by the vogue of the Neapolitan. Carillo, of whom Mr. J. Fitzmaurice Kelly has given an interesting account, was an enthusiastic disciple of Marini, and the Spaniards read Marinesque verses, in the *Obras* of Carillo (1611), long before the authentic *Adone* was published in Italy. In England the imitation of Marini by Crashaw and Cowley was presently patent. But, here again, it is almost impossible to believe that Donne came under the influence of Marini. To credit it we should have to believe that the English poet visited Naples as a youth, and was initiated into the mysteries of Marinism before the ingenious master himself had decided what turn his own theories should take. Until the *Adone* was published, the peculiar talent of Marini was hardly perceived outside Naples and Spain; and by this time (1623) Donne was Dean of St. Paul's and a finished writer. Moreover, while it is certain

that between Donne and Góngora there existed a very curious intellectual parallelism—which led each to create a school of *culturantismo* the results of which, in either country, had a remarkable resemblance—the likeness between Donne and Marini is, on the other hand, very superficial, and grows less and less definite the more narrowly we examine it. We must, at length, give to Donne such credit as is due to complete originality in working out and forcing upon English taste a style in which affectation and wilful obscurity took a part so prominent that by ordinary readers no other qualities are nowadays perceived. This style was gradually accepted, and it may now be interesting to trace with some precision the stages of the school of Donne in the seventeenth century.

There can be no doubt, I think, that the earliest of Donne's disciples in poetry was Henry King, his well-beloved friend and executor. As soon as Donne entered the church, in 1615, and began to preach at Paddington, he came within the influential family circle of John King, Bishop of London, and this acquaintance with the father deepened into intimacy with the son. Henry King was closely identified with Donne at St. Paul's, for he was a canon residentiary of the Cathedral. It is not usual to recollect that King, whose poems did not appear until 1657, when he was Bishop of Chichester and sixty-six years of age, really went back to the very close of the Elizabethan age. He was a member of the transitional generation, to which Wither, Browne, Quarles, and Herrick belonged. His poetry is gentle and pensive, melancholy in tone, wanting in force of animal spirits. But it has an historic interest to us in the present context, because in Henry King we have a writer, certainly as early as 1612, inditing verse, which is imitation of Donne and of no one else. Indeed, in an elegy on Prince Henry, King was actually associated with Donne several years before the latter took Orders. He carries his imitation of the Dean of St. Paul's even to a partiality for tags of Spanish proverbial philosophy.

The mild verse of Henry King does not lend itself very

easily to quotation. Here, however, is a typical passage from "The Exequy," one of the longest of King's pieces, and one of which, as of most of his poetry, it may be said that not a line would be what it now is if Donne had never lived. The poet urges Death to be careful of his mistress—

" Be kind to her ; and, prithee, look  
 Thou write into thy doomsday-book  
 Each parcel of this rarity  
 Which in thy casket shrin'd doth lie ;  
 See that thou make thy reckoning straight,  
 And yield her back again by weight ;  
 For thou must audit on thy trust  
 Each grain and atom of this dust,  
 As thou will answer Him, that lent,  
 Not gave, thee my dear monument."

Every image, every illustration here is taken from the pedestrian business of the hour, and follows only too closely the realistic law which Donne had invented. Henry King was forty when Donne died. We need not question that the Dean saw, and even possibly touched up, the majority of those poems which the younger Marriot published for King in 1657, since, as the publisher said to the Bishop in performing this gentle outrage upon his modesty, "These *juvenilia* are most of them the issues of your youthful muse." Almost the same expression had been used, a quarter of a century earlier, by the elder Marriot in reference to the posthumous poems of Donne himself. Henry King lived on until 1669, when he died, full of years and honours, but never having done, so far as we can perceive, anything to protect or further the posthumous fame of his great master.

A later but a more celebrated disciple of Donne's is George Herbert, who in his poetical work bears to the Dean very much the relation of Pope to Dryden. Herbert is more polished, more adroit, in fuller command of the medium; but we miss from his evenly attractive verse the strength and concentration, the high originality and the splendid flashes of intuition which light up the dark landscapes of Donne. The early poetry of George

Herbert, courtly and amatory, was all destroyed when, about 1627, he passed through "such spiritual conflicts, as none can think, but only those that have endured them." It was just at this time, during the incursion of the plague, that he was so closely brought under the influence of Donne at Chelsea. The precious volume of sacred poems and private ejaculations, called *The Temple*, mirrors, as we have his own authority for saying, the ardours and tremors of this critical time. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find the very aura of Donne exhaled, like a spice, from this exquisite casket of divine verse. George Herbert died two years after his master, and the collections of their posthumous poetry appeared almost simultaneously. *The Temple* was, from the first, an extremely successful and popular book, and must have done much to familiarise readers with the mode of the new poetry.

The same characteristics, in very unattractive form, are found in the verses of George Herbert's elder brother Edward, afterwards Lord Herbert of Cherbury, a very brilliant man who was a remarkably dull poetaster. His verses did not appear until 1665. A late elegy on Donne, attributed to "Dr. C. B. of O.," is understood to have been written by that "most celebrated wit," Richard Corbet, who was made Bishop of Oxford in 1629. He was famous for the "jest, romantic fancies, and exploits which he made and performed extemporary." He was translated to Norwich, and in 1647 published his "elegant poems," which are of no great merit. Jasper Mayne, whose name has occurred too often in these volumes, was a still less important lyrist, although not without distinction as a dramatist; in 1653 he published a quarto volume of sermons in which the influence of Donne was apparent. All these were men of secondary or tertiary rank, who accepted Donne as their leader in his lifetime, and who aided him in obtaining a victory for his ideas. They were not without a certain vanity in their power to appreciate his obscure and intellectual poetry. Henry King speaks of the art of Donne as a mystery, to which not all may be admitted, and Jasper Mayne, with naïveté, boasts that he is thought a wit who

understands the *Songs and Sonnets*. So, lately, in France, it was supposed to give proof of unusual culture to be able to appreciate the poems of Stéphane Mallarmé. To comprehend the incomprehensible is always distinguished.

We descend to the generation which could scarcely have seen Donne, and certainly could not claim to have received initiation at his hands. The future Bishop of Chichester had become inspired at the very touch of "that awful fire, which once did burn from" the living lips of Donne. Habington, a virtuous Catholic gentleman, retired on his estates in Worcestershire, precisely needed this personal touch to transform his lukewarm talent to the heat of genius. Much more impression was made on William Davenant, who nevertheless was a ponderous and turbid writer. Nor are the beauties so much as the faults and tasteless caprices of Sir John Suckling due to imitation of Donne. It is a reflection very melancholy to the admirer of the Dean of St. Paul's that, as a rule, his work either attracted young men of an essentially unpoetic type to the study of verse, or else, which may be more disastrous, it encouraged in the genuinely poetic a cultivation of the most prosaic qualities of their minds. Even the great Cowley, who was the most illustrious of all Donne's direct disciples, is no exception to this rule. The following of Donne seems to have desiccated his imagination, and to have encouraged in him, at the expense of passion, a wearisome intellectual volubility.

The most illustrious of Donne's indirect disciples was Crashaw, the greatest of English mystics. Without the example of Donne, Crashaw would have written in a totally different manner, but the influences at work in the modelling of his genius are largely exotic also. He was seduced by the gorgeous and sensuous conceits of Marini, the worst of masters, but was saved from destruction by the Spanish neoplatonists. Donne wrote his chief poetry too early to be disturbed by the *Spiritual Works* of St. John of the Cross, which were posthumously published in 1616, but these entered into the very blood of Crashaw, while to the great St. Teresa he

owed as much, nay, probably more, than Donne himself had done. The intensity of Donne's style at its best, and the mental concentration which he had taught, lent themselves peculiarly well to the expression of transcendental spiritual emotion. Indeed, in England, mysticism has always since the reign of Elizabeth spoken in the voice of Donne. The Spanish illuminates combined with the English master to impress upon the burning heart of Crashaw an ecstasy which found speech in some of the most exquisite utterances of the seventeenth century, and it is only fair, while we deplore the dulness of much of the verse which claimed descent from Donne, to remember that he was at least equally the forerunner and "only begetter" of those "large draughts of intellectual day," those throbbing and flaming phrases of divine hyperbole, which place the name of Crashaw, an Englishman, beside, or a very little way below, that of the Mother of all mystics, the incomparable Carmelite of Avila.

During the transitional period, when poetry, in its extreme decay, was hesitating to accept the reformed versification offered to it by Waller and Denham, the only influences to be observed were those of Ben Jonson on dramatic and of Donne on non-dramatic verse. The latter, in some cases, such as those of the Matchless Orinda, Flatman, and Nahum Tate, achieved positive popularity, although to our ears and eyes to-day almost entirely unreadable. The direct model of these poets, however, was not Donne, but Cowley, whose style was more directly imitable, and who did not offer the stumbling-block of profound imagination and daring flights of style. The corruption of the genius of Donne may be seen to great effect in Thomas Flatman, who was born about the time that Donne died. The *Poems and Songs* of this man, now fallen into absolute neglect, was a favourite book with readers of the Restoration period, and ran through many editions. This is an example of his manner—

" By immaterial defecated love,  
Your soul its heavenly origin doth prove,  
And in least dangerous raptures soars above.

Our modish rhymes, like culinary fire,  
Unctuous and earthy, shall in smoke expire;  
In odorous clouds your incense shall aspire."

In such lines as these, Flatman contrives with astonishing precision to reproduce the fume, if not indeed what he calls "the flame," of "reverend Donne."

No one who studies that remarkable and now neglected poem, the *Annus Mirabilis*, can fail to notice the paramount prestige which Donne exercised over the youthful mind of Dryden. The genius of the Dean of St. Paul's was thus present at the inauguration of the new order of style, and although the preface says much of Lucan and of Ovid, and nothing of the English poet, yet it is Donne far more than the Latins who is really active in Dryden's memory. The weight of the lines, the intensity which the writer endeavours to press into them, the violence and startling nature of the illustrations, and, above all, the constant reference to images essentially modern and realistic, all this is due to no other model than Donne. The sound of the Dean's strong verse echoes in such stanzas as—

" Plied thick and close as when the fight begun,  
Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away ;  
So sicken waning moons too near the sun,  
And blunt their crescents on the edge of day,"

and the movement of his fancy is seen in such as this, so closely criticised both by Johnson and Scott—

" With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,  
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,  
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,  
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves,"

while the perilous agility of Donne's wit is felt in the description of the heavy rains which checked the Great Fire—

" An hollow crystal pyramid He takes  
In firmamental waters dipped above,  
Of it a broad extinguisher He makes,  
And hoods the flames that to their quarry strove."

After 1667, the direct traces of the imitation of Donne disappear, or at least become faint and general, in the verse of Dryden. He did not, however, neglect his great predecessor, and in several of his essays he made some critical remarks of great value. In the preface to *Eleonora*, in 1692, we read :—

“ Doctor Donne, the greatest wit, though not the best poet of our nation, acknowledges that he had never seen Mistress Drury, whom he has made immortal in his admirable *Anniversaries*. I have had the same fortune [Dryden never saw the Countess of Abingdon], though I have not succeeded to the same genius. However, I have followed [Donne’s] footsteps in the design of his panegyric.”

Dryden came to depreciate the love poetry of Donne, saying that “he affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign : and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with the speculations of philosophy, where he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softness of love.”

In the *Essay on Satire*, prefixed in 1693 to his “Juvenal,” Dryden speaks repeatedly of Donne, whose best verses were manifestly appealing less and less to the taste of the age :—

“ Why should we offer to confine free spirits to one form, when we cannot so much as confine our bodies to one fashion of apparel ? Would not Donne’s Satires, which abound with so much wit, appear more charming if he had taken care of his words and of his numbers ? But he followed Horace so very close, that of necessity he must fall with him ; and I may safely say it of this present age, that, if we are not so great wits as Donne, yet, certainly, we are better poets.”

When, in a regrettable passage of undiluted eulogy, Dryden wished to flatter Lord Dorset to the top of his bent, he told him that Donne alone, of all the English poets, had equalled him in talent, and that even the Dean of St. Paul’s “was not happy enough to arrive at [Dorset’s] versification.” Again, that laudation may reach

its acme, Dryden declares that Dorset "equals Donne in the variety, multiplicity, and choice of thoughts, and excels him in the manner and the words. I read you both with the same admiration." This is tantamount to saying that, especially in the department of "wit," Dryden admired Donne more than he admired any other British poet. And this more than sixty years after Donne's death, and across more than one complete revolution in taste and literary fashion! For those who were sagacious enough to read between the lines, and discount the flattery of Dorset, this was praise for Donne of an extraordinary quality. He has never since found an admirer so strenuous among critics of a like authority with Dryden.

The words "wit" and "poet" have changed their meaning again in two hundred years. With what was witty Dryden identified the exercise of the intellect; it was the incessant mental preoccupation which he came, in his old age, to blame in Donne. As poetry, he now distinguished, not imagination, or even fancy, but a technical uniformity and smoothness, and a close adherence to the supposed Aristotelian laws. For Dryden's advanced taste, even Donne was now too raw and spontaneous, and preserved too much of the barbaric note of Elizabeth. English poetry, in its redeemed and corrected forms, was to look no further back for models than to Cowley, Waller, and Denham. But, after all, these had in their day been the disciples and imitators of Donne, and had used his vogue with the young as a lever to dislodge the romantic supremacy of Spenser and the Petrarchists. So that in his very depreciation of Donne, and his defence of the polite numbers of Waller and Denham, Dryden is really asserting the permanent impress made by the Dean of St. Paul's on English poetry.

When the eighteenth century has fairly commenced, it grows difficult to trace the influence of Donne. His *Poems*, as we have seen, were reprinted in 1719, and before that time his Satires were modernised by Pope in two paraphrases, of which that called *The Impertinent* is the more successful. It is easy to see that Pope, while far too acute not to

perceive the masculine force of Donne, was completely out of sympathy with his style. He was even more conscious than Dryden had been of the rugosities of Donne's metre, and he was incapable of appreciating any method in satire except that of polished and pointed antithesis. The central quality of Donne, his mystical passion, was beyond the comprehension of Pope, who, nevertheless, has more than a touch of Donne's intellectual stress and fervour. Where the diction of Pope is richest and most idiomatic we see, or may think we see, the suffused influence of the Dean of St. Paul's. If, for instance, we read the last lines of the *Dunciad*, where Chaos reasserts its sway, "and universal darkness buries all," we must confess that if any Elizabethan poet can be imagined writing those verses, or any of them, it can only be Donne—

"Physic of metaphysic begs defence,  
And metaphysic calls for aid on sense!  
See mystery to mathematics fly!  
In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave and die!"

These are lines which it is absolutely inconceivable should have proceeded from the pen of Spenser or Sir Philip Sidney or Drayton. It is, we feel, by no means so incredible that Donne might have included them in a "metamorphosis" or an "anniversary." That kind of writing, at all events, may be traced backward to Donne, and no further. From him the descent of it is unbroken, and in that sense the direct influence of Donne may be discovered in the writings of Pope, although the two men were in most essentials so diametrically opposed.

In the minor figures around and below Pope, it seems entirely unrecognisable, except in the dissolved form in which all far-fetched conceits and arid sports of fancy may be traced back to the original heresies of the Dean of St. Paul's. The funereal poets of the middle of the eighteenth century revived a species of gloomy passion which was far more in sympathy with the better part of Donne. It is difficult to believe that Young had not read the pieces in which the great Dean a hundred years earlier extolled the

majesty of Death. The conceits of *Night Thoughts*, Young's laborious rhetorical affectations, such as

“ Amid such mighty plunder, why exhaust  
Thy partial quiver on a mark so mean,”

or as—

“ O had he, mounted on his wing of fire,  
Soar'd where I sink, and sung immortal man,  
How had it blest mankind—and rescu'd me ! ”

are instances of forced poetic wit differentiated in nothing but changed phraseology from similar extravagances in the less fortunate passages of Donne.

The modern appreciation of Donne seems to begin with Robert Browning, who met with the poems when he was still a boy (about 1827), and was greatly influenced by them. He put the Mandrake song to music. He quoted and praised the Dean so constantly in later years that Miss Barrett noticed it early in their acquaintance; “your Donne,” she says on several occasions. The stamp of the Dean's peculiar intensity of feeling can be traced in many of Browning's lyrics; his famous “obscurity” is closely analogous to Donne's. Of subsequent instances of the influence of Donne on English poetry this is hardly the place to speak.



## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### THE WILL OF DONNE'S FATHER

IN the name of God, Amen. The sixteenth day of January 1575[6]. And in the eighteenth year of the reign of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, I, John Donne, citizen and ironmonger of London, being sick in body but of good and perfect mind and remembrance, &c., do make this my present testament in form following: That is to say, First and principally, I give and commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God my Maker, Saviour and Redeemer, in whom and by the merit of the second Person, Jesus Christ, I trust and believe assuredly to be saved and to have full and clear remission and forgiveness of my sins. And I commit my body to the earth to be buried in the parish of Saint Nicholas Olive in Breadstreet in London, where I am now a parishioner, in such convenient place there as shall be appointed by my executrix hereunder named. And after that done, then I will that all my goods and chattels, plate, household stuff, ready money and debts, and all other my movable goods and chattels whatsoever, shall be divided into three equal and indifferent parts and portions, according to the laudable use and custom of the City of London; whereof one equal part thereof I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth, my wife, to her own proper use. And one other equal part thereof I give and bequeath to and amongst all my children, as well now living. As to the third, which my wife now goeth withal amongst all my said children, to be divided portion and portion like. And so be paid to my said children equally portion and portion like: that is to say, when my said sons shall come to their ages of twenty and one years, and my said daughters shall accomplish their several lawful age of twenty and one years, or on marriage. And the other part thereof I reserve to myself and to my executrix hereunder named, to pay my debts and perform my legacies hereunder expressed. And the remainder of my said part my debts and legacies, paid and performed, I wholly give and bequeath unto my said executrix and my children equally amongst them, to be divided portion and portion like, every of my said children to be heir to other, if death shall happen unto any of them in the meantime. Item, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Francis Sandbach one hundred pounds in money, to be employed in deed of charity and relief of poor people at his discretion within six months after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Edmond Adamson, gentleman, one hundred pounds in money to be liberally employed and bestowed by him in work of charity and of relieving of poor and needy persons at his discretion within the like space of six months next after my decease. Item, I give and bequeath unto Christopher Rust, gentleman, one hundred pounds in money to be by him employed and bestowed in work of charity and relieving of poor and impotent people within the space of three months after my decease at his discretion. Item, I give and bequeath unto the worshipful Company of the Ironmongers in London, whereof I myself am a member, the sum of ten pounds in money. Item, I give and bequeath to my loving friends, Robert Estland, William Skidmore, ten pounds apiece in money to make them and their wives rings with Death's head. Item, I give and bequeath unto John Crosland, ironmonger, ten pounds in money to make him and his wife rings with Death's head. Item, I give and bequeath unto Robert Harrison, salter, my best gown welted with velvet and faced with budge. Item, I give and bequeath unto the beadle of this said Company of Ironmongers my best gown faced with damask and not guarded with velvet. Item, I give and bequeath unto twelve poor men which shall attend upon my body to burial twelve gowns. Item, I give and bequeath unto the prisons in London and the suburbs thereof, that is to say, Newgate, Ludgate, the Fleet, the two Compters in the Poultry, in the Woodstreet, and to Bedlam, and to the relief of the poor prisoners in the King's Bench, the Marshalry, the White Lion, and the Compter in Southwark twenty shillings apiece. Item, I give and bequeath unto and amongst the poor people harboured in the hospitals of Christ Church, St. Bartholemew's, Bidwell, and St. Thomas in Southwark twenty pounds; that is to say, to every of the same hospitals five pounds. Item, I give and bequeath unto my brother Dawson of the city of Oxford one hundred marks in money. Item, I give and bequeath unto my sister, Marden, a gown of black cloth. Item, I give and bequeath unto my said brother Dawson and my sister his wife and to their two children and to every of them, gowns of black cloth. Item, I give and bequeath unto my cousin Alice Donne, now dwelling with me, twenty pounds in money, to be paid unto the said Alice at her age of twenty and one years (if she so long shall live). Item, I give and bequeath unto John Dawson, my kinsman, the sum of ten pounds in money, to be paid to the said John within three months next after my decease. Item, I give and bequeath to and amongst the poor people dwelling in the parish of Saint Nicholas Olive aforesaid, to be dealt and distributed by the parson and churchwardens of the said parish church, where most need shall appear, within one week next after my decease, the sum of three pounds in money. Item, I give and bequeath unto John Sayward, parson of the said parish church, twenty shillings. Item, I give and bequeath unto my servant John White, six pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence in money. Item, I give and bequeath unto Agnes Cooper and Agnes Dawson, my maiden aunts, and to each of them, fifty shillings apiece. Item, I give and bequeath unto Chris-

topher Rust, gentleman, three pounds in gold to make him a ring, to be engraved with a Death's head. Item, I give and bequeath unto my cousin, John Heywood, three pounds in gold to make him a ring with a Death's head. The residue of my third part of all and singular my goods, chattels, plate, household stuff, ready money and debts, and all other my movables whatsoever, my debts paid, my legacies and this my will performed accordingly, I wholly give and bequeath unto and amongst Elizabeth my wife and my children, portion and portion like. And I make and ordain the said Elizabeth my wife, sole executrix of this my testament and last will. And overseers of my said testament to see the same truly performed accordingly, I ordain and make Mr. Francis Sandbach, Esquire, and Edmond Adamson, gentleman. And I give and bequeath unto either of them for their pains to be taken in that behalf five pounds in gold apiece to make either of them a ring with a Death's head, requiring them to be aiding and assisting to my said executrix in the true execution of this my present testament, as my trust is in them. Item, I give and bequeath unto Mr. Plankney twenty shillings. And I do by this my present testament revoke and annihilate all other wills and testaments by me heretofore made, and I will that none of them shall stand or abide in form or effect, but only this my present testament in such manner and form as I have afore willed and devised. In witness thereof to this my present testament and last will, I, the said John Donne, have set my seal, the day and year above written. By me, John Donne, witnesses hereunto, Robert Harrison, salter; William Broadbank, scrivener; and John White.

Probatum fuit hujusmodi testamentum coram Domino judice curie Prerogative Cantuarensis commissario apud London, octavo die mensis Februarii Anno Domino millesimo quingentissimo septuagesimo quinto, juramento Christoferi Robinson notarii publici procuratoris Elizabethae relicte et executracis, &c. Qui commissa fuit administratio omnium et singulorum bonorum, &c. De bene, &c., jurata, &c.

## APPENDIX B

### THE WILL OF DR. JOHN DONNE

IN the name of the holy blessed and glorious Trinity, Amen.

I, John Donne, by the mercy of Christ Jesus and by the calling of the Church of England priest being at this time in good and perfect understanding praised be God therefore, do hereby make my last Will and Testament in manner and form following.

First I give my good and gracious God an entire sacrifice of body

and soul with my most humble thanks for that assurance which His blessed Spirit imprints in me now of the salvation of the one and the resurrection of the other and for that constant and cheerful resolution which the same Spirit established in me to live and die in the religion now professed in the Church of England. In expectation of that resurrection I desire that my body may be buried in the most private manner that may be in that place of Saint Paul's Church, London which the now residentiaries of that church have been pleased at my request to assign for that purpose.

Item I make my well beloved friends Henry King Doctor of Divinity and John Montford Doctor of Divinity both residentiaries of the church of Saint Paul's London executors of this my will.

And my will and desire is that my very worthy friend and kind brother-in-law Sir Thomas Grymes of Peckham in the county of Surrey Knight be overseer of this my will to whom I give hereby that striking clock which I ordinarily wear and also the picture of King James.

To Doctor King my executor I give that medal of gold of the synod of Dort which the estates presented me withal at the Hague as also the two pictures of Padre Paolo and Fulgentio which hang in the parlour at my house at Paul's and to Doctor Montford my other executor I give forty ounces of white plate and the two pictures that hang on the same side of the parlour.

Item I give to the right honourable the Earl of Carlisle the picture of the blessed Virgin Mary which hangs in the little dining-chamber. And to the right honourable the Earl of Dorset the picture of Adam and Eve which hangs in the great chamber.

Item I give to Doctor Winniff Dean of Gloucester and residentiary of St. Paul's the picture called the Skeleton which hangs in the Hall and to my kind friend Mr. George Garrard the picture of Mary Magdalene in my chamber and to my ancient friend Doctor Brook, Master of Trinity College in Cambridge the picture of the blessed Virgin and Joseph which hangs in my study and to Mr. Tourvall a French Minister (but by the ordination of the English Church) I give any picture which he will choose of those which hang in the little dining-room and are not formerly bequeathed.

Item I give to my two faithful servants Robert Christmas and Thomas Roper officers of the Church of St. Paul's to each of them five pounds to make them seal rings engraved with that figure which I usually seal withal of which sort they know I have given many to my particular friends.

Item I give to my god-daughter Constance Grymes ten pounds to be bestowed in plate for her.

Item I give to that maid who hath many years attended my daughters whose name is Elizabeth, twenty pounds if she shall be in my service at the time of my death and to the other maid-servants which shall be in my service at that time I give a year's wages over and beyond that which shall at that time be due to them.

Item I give to Vincent my coachman and to my servant John Christmas to each of them ten pounds if they be at the time of my death in my service.

Item I give to Thomas Moore a young boy whom I took lately five pounds if he shall be in my service then and if any of these servants shall be departed from me before I give to every man-servant that shall at that time be in my service a year's wages over and above that which shall be then due to them.

Item I give to each of the petty canons and vicars choral which shall be in the Church of St. Paul at the time of my death to each of them forty shillings and forty shillings to the master of the choristers and forty shillings to be equally distributed amongst the then choristers.

Item I give thirty shillings to each of the vergers and to each of the bell ringers twenty shillings.

Item I will and bequeath to my cousin Jane Kent who hath heretofore been servant to my mother twelve pounds and to my cousin Edward Dawson being decayed twelve pounds and to his sister Grace Dawson six pounds which proportion they being aged persons I make account doth answer those pensions which I have yearly heretofore given unto them and meant to have continued for their lives if it had pleased to God to have continued mine.

Item my will is that the four large pictures of the four great prophets which hang in the Hall and that large picture of ancient church work which hang in the lobby leading to my chamber and whatsoever I have placed in the Chapel (excepted that wheel of desks which at this time stands there) shall remain still in those place. As also the marble table sun dial and pictures which I have placed in the garden of all which I desire an inventory may be made by sure register and the things to continue always in the house as they are.

Item I give to my daughter Harvey all the furniture which is usually in that chamber which we call the flannel chamber and in the inner chamber thereof.

Item I give to the poor of the parish of St. Gregory's where I dwell five pounds. And to the poor of each of the parishes of St. Dunstan's in the West London and of Sevenoaks in Kent and of Blunham in Bedfordshire to each parish twenty pounds.

Item I give to the Right Honourable the Earl of Kent patron of that church of Blunham the picture of laying Christ in the tomb which hangs in my study.

Item my will is that all the former legacies given in money be paid within six weeks after my death. All which legacies being so paid and all charge that can in any way fall upon my executors being discharged, my will is that my plate and books (such books only being excepted as by a schedule signed with my hand I shall give away) and all my other goods being praised and sold all my poor estate of money left and money so raised and money lent may be distributed in manner and form following.

First I will that for the maintenance of my dearly beloved mother

whom it hath pleased God after a plentiful fortune in her former times to bring in decay in her very old age, there be employed five hundred pounds of which my meaning is not that the property but only the profit should accrue to her during her natural life and after her death the said five hundred pounds to be divided amongst those my children which shall be then alive. And because there may be some time before any profit of that money will come to her hands my will is that twenty pounds be paid unto her order and besides the benefit of the five hundred pounds at the breaking up of my family and her removing from thence.

Item my will is that my children's portions should be equal if they be unmarried at my death. But if they be married before, they are to content themselves with that which they shall have received from me at their marriage. Except I make some other declaration of my will by a codicil hereafter to be annexed my will nevertheless is that my eldest daughter Constance Harvey who received from me at her first marriage but five hundred pounds for portion shall be equal with the rest who at my death are to receive portions though their portions amount to no more than five hundred pounds.

And therefore whereas there is at this time in my hands a conveyance of a certain farm called the Tanhouse from her husband Mr. Samuel Harvey in consideration of two hundred and fifty pounds paid by me for his use in which there is a proviso for redemption for a certain time. My will is that if that two hundred and fifty pounds be accordingly paid it be then added to the whole stock which is to be divided amongst the children. If for default of payment it become absolutely mine my will is that that land be reassured unto him and his heirs with this condition and not otherwise that it be added to her jointure for her life if she survive him and if it fall out that this land be thus given back, whereby my daughter received two hundred and fifty pounds above her former five hundred, my will is that she make no claim to any part of my estate by anything formerly said in this my will till all the rest of my children have received seven hundred and fifty pounds because upon the whole matter she hath received so much, if I give back that land.

But if by God's goodness their portions come to more, then she is also to enter for an equal part of the surplus as well in that which returns to the children after my mother's death as any other way. In all which accrues which may come to my daughter Harvey my will is that upon receipt thereof her husband make a proportionable addition to her jointure in land or else that that money which shall so accrue unto them may come to the longer liver of them.

Item I give to my son George that annuity of forty pounds yearly for the payment of which my honourable friend Sir John Danvers of Chelsea Knight hath some years since accepted from me first two hundred pounds and after one hundred marks of which annuity though there be as yet no assurance made, yet there remain with me bonds for those several sums. And Sir John Danvers will upon request

made, either make such assurance or repay the money as he hath always promised me. And my will is that whatsoever arises to my other children my son George be made equal to them that two hundred pounds and one hundred marks being accounted as part of the sum.

Item my will is that the portions which shall become due to my two sons John and George and to my eldest daughter Bridget yet unmarried be paid to them as soon after my death as may be because they are of years to govern their portions. But for my two younger daughters Margaret and Elizabeth my will is that their portions be paid at the days of their several marriages or at their age of two and twenty years, their portions to be employed in the meantime for their maintenance and for the increase of their portions if it will bear it. And if they or either of them die before that time of marriage or of two and twenty years that then the portions of them or either of them so dying shall be equally divided amongst my other children which shall be alive at their death. And because there may be some time before they receive anything for their maintenance out of the employment of their portions, my will is that to each of my children, John, George, Bridget, Margaret, and Elizabeth there be twenty pounds paid at the same time as I have formerly appointed the like sum to be paid to my mother.

Item I give to my honourable and faithful friend Mr. Robert Carr of his Majesty's bed-chamber that picture of mine which is taken in shadows and was made very many years before I was of this profession. And to my honourable friend Sir John Danvers I give what picture he shall accept of those that remain unbequeathed.

And this my last will and testament made in the fear of God whose mercy I humbly beg and constantly rely upon in Christ Jesus and in perfect love and charity with all the world whose pardon I ask from the lowest of my servants to the highest of my superiors. I write all with mine own hand and subscribed my name to every page thereof of which there are five and sealed the same and published and declared it to be my last will the thirteenth day of December 1630 —.

J. DONNE — in the presence of —

SAMUEL HARVEY —	EDWARD PICKERELL —
JOHN HARRINGTON —	JOHN GIBBS —
ROBERT CHRISTMAS.	

(This Will was proved 5th April 1631 by Dr. Henry King, and Dr. John Montford, the executors.)

## APPENDIX C

THE WESTMORELAND TEXT OF THE  
HOLY SONNETS

THE series of the "Holy Sonnets" in the Westmoreland MS. is not only fuller by three poems than any of the published texts, but also offers so many important differences of arrangement and new readings, that I have thought it best, for reasons given in the body of this book (vol. ii. p. 106), to print this text for the first time, with a careful collation of the seventeenth century editions.

## HOLY SONNETS.

## I

THOU hast made me, and shall Thy work decay?  
Repair me now, for now mine end doth haste;  
I run to death, and Death meets me as fast,  
And all my pleasures are like yesterday.  
I dare not move my dim eyes any way;  
Despair behind, and Death before doth cast  
Such terror, and my feebled flesh doth waste  
By sin in it, which it towards hell doth weigh.  
Only Thou art above, and when towards Thee  
By Thy leave I can look, I rise again;  
But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,  
That not one hour I can myself sustain.  
Thy grace may wing me to prevent his art  
And Thou like adamant draw mine iron heart.

Not published in 1633; l. 7. 1635, *feeble*; l. 12. 1635, *myself I can*.

## II

As due by many titles I resign  
Myself to Thee, O God. First I was made  
By Thee, and for Thee, and when I was decay'd  
Thy blood bought that, the which before was Thine.  
I am Thy son, made with Thyself to shine,  
Thy servant, whose pains Thou hast still repaid,  
Thy sheep, Thine image, and—till I betray'd  
Myself—a temple of Thy Spirit divine.

Why doth the devil then usurp in me ?  
 Why doth he steal, nay ravish, that's Thy right ?  
 Except Thou rise and for Thine own work fight,  
 O ! I shall soon despair, when I do see  
 That Thou lov'st mankind well, yet will not choose me,  
 And Satan hates me, yet is loath to lose me.

This is No. i. in 1633 ; l. 9. all editions, *on me* ; l. 12. 1635, *I shall see.*

## III

O ! might those sighs and tears return again  
 Into my breast and eyes, which I have spent,  
 That I might in this holy discontent  
 Mourn with some fruit, as I have mourn'd in vain.  
 In my idolatry what showers of rain  
 Mine eyes did waste ? what griefs my heart did rent ?  
 That sufferance was my sin, now I repent ;  
 Because I did suffer, I must suffer pain.  
 Th' hydroptic drunkard, and night-scouting thief,  
 The itchy lecter, and self-tickling proud,  
 Have the remembrance of past joys, for relief  
 Of coming ills. To poor me is allow'd  
 No ease ; for long, yet vehement grief hath been  
 Th' effect and cause, the punishment and sin.

Not printed in 1633 ; l. 5. 1635, *mine* ; l. 8. 1635, *Cause.*

## IV

Father, part of His double interest  
 Unto Thy kingdom Thy Son gives to me ;  
 His jointure in the knotty Trinity  
 He keeps, and gives [to] me his death's conquest.  
 This Lamb, whose death with life the world hath blest,  
 Was from the world's beginning slain, and He  
 Hath made two wills, which with the legacy  
 Of His and Thy kingdom doth thy sons invest.  
 Yet such are Thy laws, that men argue yet  
 Whether a man those statutes can fulfil.  
 None doth ; but [Thy] all-healing grace and Spirit  
 Revive and quicken what law and letter kill.  
 Thy law's abridgement, and Thy last command  
 Is all but love ; O let that last Will stand !

This is No. xii. in 1633, and No. xvi. from 1635 onwards ; l. 8. 1635, omits *do* ;  
 l. 9. *these laws* in all editions ; l. 12. *Revive again* in all editions.

O my black soul, now thou art summonèd  
 By sickness, Death's herald and champion ;  
 Thou'rt like a pilgrim, which abroad hath done  
 Treason, and durst not turn to whence he's fled ;  
 Or like a thief, which till death's doom be read,  
 Wisheth himself deliver'd from prison ;  
 But, damned and haled to execution,  
 Wisheth that still he might be imprisoned.  
 Yet grace, if thou repent, thou can'st not lack ;  
 But who shall give thee that grace to begin ?  
 O, make thyself with holy mourning black,  
 And red with blushing, as thou art with sin ;  
 Or wash thee in Christ's blood, which hath this might  
 That being red, it dyes red souls to white.

This in No. ii. in 1633 ; No. iv. in 1635 and onwards.

This is my play's last scene ; here heavens appoint  
 My pilgrimage's last mile ; and my race  
 Idly, yet quickly run, hath this last pace ;  
 My span's last mile, my minutes' latest point ;  
 And glutinous Death will instantly unjoint  
 My body and soul, and I shall sleep a space ;  
 Or presently (I know not) see that face,  
 Whose fear already shakes my every joint.  
 Then, as my soul to heaven her first seat takes flight,  
 And earth-born body in the earth shall dwell,  
 So fall my sins, that all may have their right,  
 To where they're bred and would press me to hell.  
 Impute me righteous, thus purg'd of evil,  
 For thus I leave the world, the flesh, the devil.

This is No. iii. in 1633 ; l. 4. *last inch* in all editions ; l. 7. *But my ever-waking part shall see*, in all editions.

I am a little world made cunningly  
 Of elements, and an angelic sprite ;  
 But black sin hath betray'd to endless night  
 My world's both parts, and, O, both parts must die.  
 You which beyond that heaven which was most high  
 Have found new spheres, and of new lands can write,  
 Pour new seas in my eyes, that so I might

Drown my world with my weeping earnestly,  
 Or wash it if it must be drown'd no more.  
 But, O, it must be burnt ; alas ! the fire  
 Of lust and envy burnt it heretofore,  
 And made it fouler ; let those flames retire,  
 And burn me, O God, with a fiery zeal  
 Of Thee and Thy house, which doth in eating heal.

This is not given in 1633 ; in 1635 and onward it is No. v. ; l. 7. 1669, *he might* ;  
 l. 12. 1635, *their flames* ; l. 13. 1635, *O Lord*.

## VIII

At the round earth's imagined corners blow  
 Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise  
 From death, you numberless infinities  
 Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go ;  
 All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,  
 All whom war, dearth, age, argues, tyrannies,  
 Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you, whose eyes  
 Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.  
 But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space  
 For, if above all these my sins abound,  
 'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,  
 When we are there. Here on this lowly ground,  
 Teach me how to repent, for that's as good  
 As if Thou hadst seal'd my pardon with Thy blood.

This is No. iv. in 1633, and No. vii. from 1635 onwards ; l. 6. in all editions, *death*.

## IX

If poisonous minerals, and if that tree  
 Whose fruit threw death on else immortal us,  
 If lecherous goats, if serpents envious  
 Cannot be damn'd, alas ! why should I be ?  
 Why should intent or reason, born in me,  
 Make sins, else equal, in me more heinous ?  
 And mercy being easy and glorious  
 To God, in His stern wrath why threatens He ?  
 But who am I, that dare dispute with Thee ?  
 O God, O ! of Thine only worthy blood,  
 And my tears, make a heavenly Lethean flood,  
 And drown in it my sin's black memory.  
 That Thou remember them, some claim as debt ;  
 I think it mercy if Thou wilt forget.

This was No. v. in 1633.

## X

If faithful souls be alike glorified  
 As angels, then my father's soul doth see,  
 And adds this even to full felicity,  
 That valiantly I hell's wide mouth o'erstride.  
 But if our minds to these souls be despaired  
 By circumstances, and by signs that be  
 Apparent in us not immediately,  
 How shall my mind's white truth to them be tried?  
 They see idolatrous lovers weep and mourn,  
 And *vile* blasphemous conjurers to call  
 On Jesu's name, and pharisaical  
 Dissemblers feign devotion. Then turn,  
 O pensive soul, to God, for He knows best  
 Thy true grief, for He put it in my breast.

Not printed in 1633; from 1635 onwards this is No. viii; l. 10. 1635, *stile*;  
 l. 14. 1635. *Thy grief, for He put it into my breast; 1669, my blood.*

## XI

Death be not proud, tho' some have callèd thee  
 Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;  
 For those, whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,  
 Die not, poor Death, nor yet can'st thou kill me.  
 From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,  
 Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow,  
 And soonest our best men with thee do go,  
 Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.  
 Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings and desperate men,  
 And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,  
 And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,  
 And easier, than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?  
 One short sleep past, we live eternally  
 And Death shall be no more; Death thou shalt die.

This was No. vi. in 1633, No. x. in 1635, and onwards; l. 12. 1633, and onwards,  
*And better.*

## XII

Wilt thou love God as He thee? then digest,  
 My soul, this wholesome meditation,  
 How God the Spirit, by angels waited on  
 In heaven, doth make His temple in thy breast  
 The Father having begot a Son most blest,  
 And still begetting—for He ne'er begun—  
 Hath deign'd to choose thee by adoption,  
 Co-heir to His glory, and Sabbath's endless rest.

And as a robb'd man, which by search doth find  
 His stolen stuff sold, must lose or buy it again,  
 The Sun of glory came down, and was slain,  
 Us whom He had made, and Satan stole, to unbind.  
 'Twas much, that man was made like God before,  
 But, that God should be made like man, much more.

This was No. xi. in 1633, No. xv. in 1635, and onwards; L. 12. 1633, *stolen*.

## XIII

Spit in my face, ye Jews, and pierce my side,  
 Buffet and scoff, scourge, and crucify me,  
 For I have sinn'd, and sinn'd, and humbly He  
 Who could do no iniquity, hath died.  
 But by my death cannot be satisfied  
 My sins, which pass the Jews' impiety.  
 They kill'd once an inglorious [man], but I  
 Crucify Him daily, being now glorified.  
 O let me then His strange love still admire;  
 Kings pardon, but He bore our punishment;  
 And Jacob came, cloth'd in vile harsh attire,  
 But to supplant and with gainful intent;  
 God cloth'd Himself in vile man's flesh, that so  
 He might be weak enough to suffer woe.

This is No. vii. in 1633, and No. xi. in 1635, and onwards; L. 3. all the editions,  
*only He.*

## XIV

Why am I by all creatures waited on?  
 Why do the prodigal elements supply  
 Life and food to me, being more pure than I,  
 Simple and further from corruption?  
 Why brook'st thou, ignorant horse, subjection?  
 Why dost thou, bull and boar, so seelily  
 Dissemble weakness, and by one man's stroke die,  
 Whose whole kind you might swallow and feed upon?  
 Alas! I am weaker, woe's me, and worse than you;  
 You have not sinn'd, nor need be timorous.  
 But wonder at a greater wonder, for to us  
 Created nature doth these things subdue;  
 But their Creator, whom sin, nor nature tied,  
 For us, His creatures, and His foes, hath died.

This is No. viii. in 1633, and No. xii. from 1635 onwards; L. 1. all the editions,  
*Why are we*; L. 4. 1635, *Simpler and*; L. 9. all the editions, *Weaker I am*; L. 11. 1635,  
 the second wonder omitted.

## XV

What if this present were the world's last night ?  
 Look in my heart, O soul, where thou dost dwell  
 The picture of Christ crucified, and tell  
 Whether that countenance can thee affright.  
 Tears in His eyes quench the amazing light ;  
 Blood fills His frowns, which from His pierced head fell ;  
 And can that tongue adjudge thee unto hell,  
 Which pray'd forgiveness for His foes' rank spite ?  
 No, no ; but as in mine idolatry  
 I said to all my profane mistresses,  
 Beauty of pity, foulness only is  
 A sign of rigour ; so I say to thee,  
 To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assign'd ;  
 This beauteous form assures a piteous mind.

This was No. ix. in 1633, and xiii. in 1635, and onwards ; l. 2. all the editions, *Look* ; l. 4. all the editions, *Whether His* ; l. 8. all the editions, *fierce spite* ; l. 14. all the editions, *assumes*.

## XVI

Batter my heart, three-person'd God ; for you  
 As yet but knock ; breathe, shine, and seek to mend ;  
 That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend  
 Your force, to break, blow, burn and make me new.  
 I like an usurp'd town, to another due,  
 Labour to admit you, but O, to no end.  
 Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,  
 But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.  
 Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,  
 But am betroth'd unto your enemy ;  
 Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,  
 Take me to you, imprison me, for I,  
 Except you enthrall me, never shall be free  
 Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

This was No. x. in 1633, and xiv. in 1635, and onwards.

## XVII

Since she whom I loved hath paid her last debt  
 To Nature, and to her's, and my good is dead,  
 And her soul early into heaven vanished,—  
 Wholly on heavenly things my mind is set.  
 Here the admiring her my mind did whet  
 To seek Thee, God ; so streams do show their head,

But tho' I have found Thee, and Thou my thirst hast fed,  
 A holy thirsty dropsy melts me yet.  
 But why should I beg more love, whenas Thou  
 Dost woo my soul for hers, off'ring all Thine ;  
 And dost not only fear lest I allow  
 My love to saints and angels, things divine,  
 But in Thy tender jealousy dost doubt  
 Lest the World, Flesh, yea Devil, put thee out ?

First printed in Gosse : *Jacobean Poets* (1894).

## XVIII

Show me, dear Christ, Thy Spouse so bright and clear.  
 What ? Is it is She, who on the other shore  
 Goes richly painted ? Or, who, robb'd and lore,  
 Laments and mourns in Germany and here ?  
 Sleeps she a thousand, then peeps up one year ?  
 Is she self-truth, and errs ? now new, now outwore ?  
 Doth she and did she and shall she evermore  
 On one, on seven, or on no hill appear ?  
 Dwells she with us, or like adventuring knights  
 First travail we to seek, and then make love ?  
 Betray, kind Husband, Thy Spouse to our sights  
 And let mine amorous soul court Thy mild Dove,  
 Who is most true, and pleasing to Thee, then  
 When she is embrac'd and open to most men.

Now first published.

## XIX

Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one ;  
 Inconstancy unnaturally hath begot  
 A constant habit ; that, when I would not,  
 I change in vows and in devotion.  
 As humorous is my contrition  
 As my profane love, and as soon forgot,  
 As riddlingly distemper'd, cold and hot ;  
 As praying as mute ; as infinite as none.  
 I durst not view Heaven yesterday ; and, to-day,  
 In prayers and flattering speeches, I court God ;  
 To-morrow I quake with true fear of His rod.  
 So my devout fits come and go away,  
 Like a fantastic ague, save that here  
 Those are my best days when I shake with fear.

Now first printed.

## APPENDIX D

As to the place of the following letters in Donne's biography, I am unable to offer the least conjecture, but I am unwilling to omit them altogether. They all appeared in the *Letters of 1651* :—

“ *To the Honourable Knight, Sir ROBERT KER.* ”

“ SIR,—Your man's haste gives me the advantage, that I am excusable in a short letter, else I should not pardon it to myself. I shall obey your commandment of coming so near you upon Michaelmas Day, as by a message to ask you whether that or the next morning be the fittest to solicit your further favour. You understand all virtue so well, as you may be pleased to call to mind what thankfulness and services are due to you from me, and believe them all to be expressed in this rag of paper, which gives you new assurance, that I am ever your most humble servant,

J. DONNE.”

“ *To the Honourable Knight, Sir ROBERT KER.* ”

“ SIR,—When I was almost at Court, I met the Prince's coach : I think I obeyed your purposes best therefore in coming hither. I am sure I provided best for myself thereby ; since my best degree of understanding is to be governed by you. I beseech you give me an assignation where I may wait upon you at your commodity this evening. Till the performance of which commandment from you, I rest here in the Red Lion.—Your very thankful and affectionate servant,

“ J. DONNE.”

“ *To Sir HENRY GOODYER.* ”

“ SIR,—I speak to you before God, I am so much affected with yesterday's accident, that I think I profane it in that name. As men which judge nativities consider not single stars, but the aspects, the concurrence and posture of them ; so in this, though no particular past arrest me, or divert me, yet all seems remarkable and enormous. God, which hath done this immediately, without so much as a sickness, will also immediately without supplement of friends, infuse His Spirit of comfort, where it is needed and deserved. I write this to you from the Spring Garden, whither I withdrew myself to think of this ; and the intenseness of my thinking ends in this, that by my help God's work should be imperfected, if by any means I resisted the amazement.—Your very true friend,

J. DONNE.”

## APPENDIX E

DR. NORMAN MOORE, F.R.C.P., and Lecturer on the Principles and Practice of Medicine to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, has been so kind as to write for me the following diagnosis of Donne's state of health and cause of death, founded upon the documents printed in the present volumes :—

“ DEAR MR. GOSSE,—Dr. Donne seems to have been inclined to dwell upon his own illnesses and their symptoms, to consider what they indicated in the past or promised for the future—

‘ And where engendered and of what humour.’

He had probably no great physical vigour, and was throughout life in that condition of mental and nervous instability, which we speak of as neurotic. This led him to dwell upon the ancient discussion as to the nature of health—

‘ There is no health, physicians say that we  
At best enjoy but a neutrality :  
And can there be worse sickness than to know  
That we are never well, nor can be so.’<sup>1</sup>

“ A man of sound mind and nerves will not be disturbed by such discussions, but will eat his meals, take his exercise, and sleep soundly, careless of what his state may be called by physicians or metaphysicians.

“ A man of sound mind, but feeble frame like Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper—

‘ A fiery soul, which, working out its way,  
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,  
And o'er informed the tenement of clay.’

Or such a person as St. Francis of Assisi, will suffer illness without dwelling on it, will drive it from his thoughts, and say nothing of it in his writings. The neurotic person dwells to himself and to others on his own feelings and illnesses, is gratified by sympathy, and enjoys his own feeling for himself. He belongs to the second group mentioned by Gray—

‘ Condemn'd alike to groan,  
The tender for another's pain,  
Th' unfeeling for his own.’

“ This condition is, however, in some of its degrees, compatible with regard for others and the maintenance of friendships—as it was in

<sup>1</sup> “An Anatomy of the World.”

Donne. It often gives a false unity to the morbid conditions of a patient throughout life. In his own idea such a patient has never been well, and therefore the various occasional attacks of catarrh, indigestion, and local pain, from which few men are free, are by him felt to be manifestations of one lifelong diseased condition, though often they are as isolated in pathological origin as similar attacks in a man of generally robust health.

"Donne had probably a feeble digestion and a tendency to gastric disturbance, increasing as he grew older, aggravated, as such a condition usually is, by fatigue (as in his case when he was abroad), and by mental distress (as after his wife's death).

"The account of his last illness, at the age of fifty-nine, his emaciation, pallor, and death-like appearance, Dr. Foxe's prescription of an exclusively fluid diet, the patient's clear mind and power of physical exertion as far as malnutrition and muscular weakness allowed it, together with the absence of any signs of lung disease, such as cough; or of heart disease, such as dropsy or angina pectoris, or of renal disease, such as dropsy—all point, in my opinion, to some abdominal new growth, of which cancer of the stomach would be the most probable form.

"Thus my conclusion is, that the wasting disease of which Donne died at fifty-nine was an abdominal new growth, which was first distinctly developed in August 1630, and that he had had several gastric attacks during previous years. This is not an uncommon history in cases of cancer of the stomach. The actual growth is, in a majority of cases, speaking of my own observations, of not longer duration than eighteen months, but I have known a single example in which the growth was plainly developed for sixty months before death took place. In one variety of the disease the patient has had various gastric symptoms for many years, and then seems to reach a date at which the new growth is developed. In some, but not all, of these cases, an old non-cancerous gastric ulcer has lasted long and preceded the new (cancerous) growth which begins in its walls. Donne mentions no symptoms (such as bringing up blood) pointing to such an ulcer, and he is so inclined to tell all he suffered that the absence of any mention of an easily observed symptom may in his case be taken to mean that he never had the symptom. If his expressions, "I eat and digest well enough," are thought to exclude the stomach, the growth may be located lower in the alimentary canal, and then probably in the large intestine. In many cases of cancer, both gastric and intestinal, the patients make no complaint of pain.

"Migraine is sometimes accompanied by gastric symptoms and recurs for years, but the long duration of the attack about which he wrote the 'Devotions' points to a definite visceral lesion and not to a purely cerebral one.

"Izaak Walton speaks of the disease 'which inclined him to a consumption,' but at that time the words consumption, tabes, and phthisis (which are of course convertible terms) are used of any continued wasting without precise reference to tuberculosis or to disease of the

lungs. Even Dr. Christopher Bennet, whose *Theatri Tabidorum Vestibulum*, 1654, and *Tabidorum Theatrum, sive phthisios, atrophiae et hectica xenodochium*, 1656, may be regarded as the first books by an English physician on tuberculosis, uses the word tabes in its widest sense, just as we still do in the terms 'tabes dorsalis' and 'tabes mesenterica'; and the same is true of Dr. Richard Morton's admirable treatise on wasting diseases *Phthisiologia seu Exercitationes de Phthisi*, 1689.

"The fact that he makes little mention of cough is probably sufficient proof that Donne had not tubercular phthisis. The negative evidence excludes also heart disease, and disease of the nervous system, whether structural or functional. All the positive evidence points to an ultimate abdominal new growth as the cause of death, and to attacks of acute gastritis as the previous illnesses, while behind all is the neurotic constitution which makes the man himself his own life-long pathological study, and so, in his descriptions, gives a unity of origin to all his illnesses, apparent to him, but not present so far as morbid anatomy is concerned.

"The opinion I have expressed rests upon the interesting passages you have sent me, with some consideration of his poems and of Walton's rather indefinite remarks. The evidence is not sufficient to decide the question absolutely, but as far as it makes him capable of a pathological explanation (to quote one of his own verses)—

"I have, and you have DONNE."

With many thanks for so interesting a problem,

"Believe me, dear Mr. Gosse, yours sincerely,

"NORMAN MOORE.

"94 Gloucester Place, Portman Square, W.,  
24th May 1899."

## APPENDIX F

MR. GEORGE W. MILLER, one of the authors of a history of Chislehurst, now in the press, has had the courtesy to supply me with the following particulars with regard to the person and descendants of Donne's tenth child and fifth daughter, Margaret, Lady Bowles, who was baptized on the 20th of April 1615, and died October 3, 1679:—

Sir William Bowles, K<sup>nt</sup>, the husband of Margaret Donne, was the second son of Robert Bowles, E<sup>sq</sup>. of Chislehurst, "Groom and Yeoman of the Toiles, Tents, Hayes, and Pavilions" to Queen Elizabeth, James I., Charles I., and Charles II., by Frances, daughter of George Baker, surgeon to Queen Elizabeth.

In the early part of the seventeenth century a good many families, including that of Bowles, who were connected with the Court, settled at Chislehurst. They were attracted, no doubt, by the society of the Walsinghams, and the convenient distance of this parish from London and Greenwich. When the Civil War broke out they all left the neighbourhood.

The early life of Lady Bowles was no doubt spent here, as her eldest daughter was baptized at the parish church.

The Bowles family for several generations held appointments in a department of the Royal Wardrobe, known as the "Tents, Toiles, Hayes, and Pavilions," or, more briefly, that of the "Tents." They were, moreover, the sole firm of tent-makers in England, as may be seen by a petition of Robert Bowles, in which he speaks of "the ancient art of making tents and pavilions, which is known to no other persons in H.M. dominions" (State Papers). Sir William Bowles, after the Restoration, lived at Clewer, near Windsor, and had a town house on Clerkenwell Green. He was a "Gentleman of the Privy Chamber in Ordinary" in 1661, J.P. in 1662, "Master of the Tents" 1663. In 1666 he applied to be made a baronet, and Royal assent was given; but the honour was changed for that of knighthood at his desire, his reason being the extravagance of his eldest son (see his will in which he leaves the bulk of his property to his second son, "in order to prevent the estates from being wasted").

Lady Bowles died in London, and was buried at Chislehurst in Sept. 1679 beside her husband's brother, Dr. George Bowles. He was an eminent physician and botanist, and is mentioned with respect in Merritt's "Pinax" and the second edition of Gerarde's "Herbal." He desired in his will to be buried at Chislehurst; and being, as a non-resident, debarred from sepulture within the church, he requested to be laid "as nigh the church wall as may be permitted." The Rector, therefore, buried him in the porch. Here Lady Bowles was laid, and two years later Sir William. The present south aisle covers the old site of the porch, and there are no monuments of them extant. Sir William died in January 1681. A month before his death he married, secondly, Mrs. Margaret Brace, widow (London Mar. Lic.).

The surviving children of Sir William and Margaret his wife were—

1. *William*, succeeded his father as Master of the Tents on the latter being appointed Keeper of H.M. Wardrobe at Greenwich Palace. Resigned it in 1683. Died without issue in 1697, and was buried at Clewer, Berks.

2. *Charles*, born 23rd July 1652; died 1700, buried at Clewer; Master of the Tents (at first jointly with his father, afterwards with his brother) to Car. II. and Jac. II. In 1685 he was appointed a Commissioner of Musters, and in that position offended the king by refusing to dispense with the Test and Oath to certain Roman Catholic candidates for the army. At the instigation of the King the Lords of the Treasury refused to pass the accounts of his office, and made no reply to a petition in which he prayed them to do so. From that time



PORTRAIT OF MARGARET, LADY BOWLES

*Photographed from a Contemporary Painting*



the "Tents, Toiles, &c.," ceased to be a department of the Royal Wardrobe. Charles Bowles was the ancestor of the family of Bowles of North Aston, Oxfordshire. His grandson, Charles Bowles, was Verderer of Windsor Forest in 1738. His great-grandson, Oldfield Bowles, "one of the most accomplished painters, amateur musicians, botanists, and farmers that Oxfordshire ever produced" (*Notes and Queries*, 5th Oct., vol. vii., p. 375) was a member of the Dillettanti Club, and popular in the cultured society of his time. The family is still extant, but they sold their estate in 1862.

3. *Duodecimus*, living in 1661, dead before 1681.

#### DAUGHTERS.

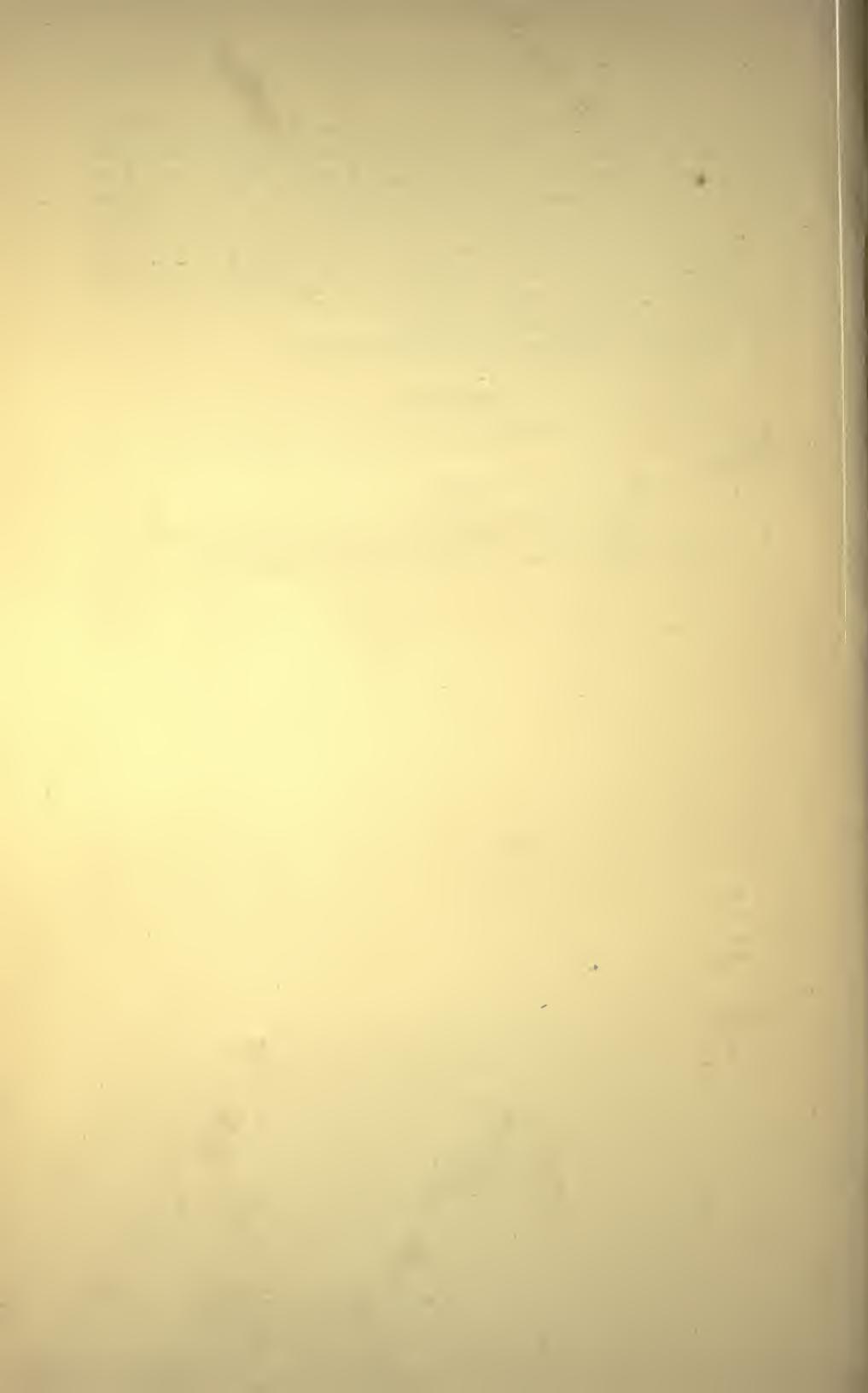
1. *Margaret*, wife of Peter Scott, Rector of Sunning-hill and Canon of Windsor.

2. *Emma*, wife of James Spelman.

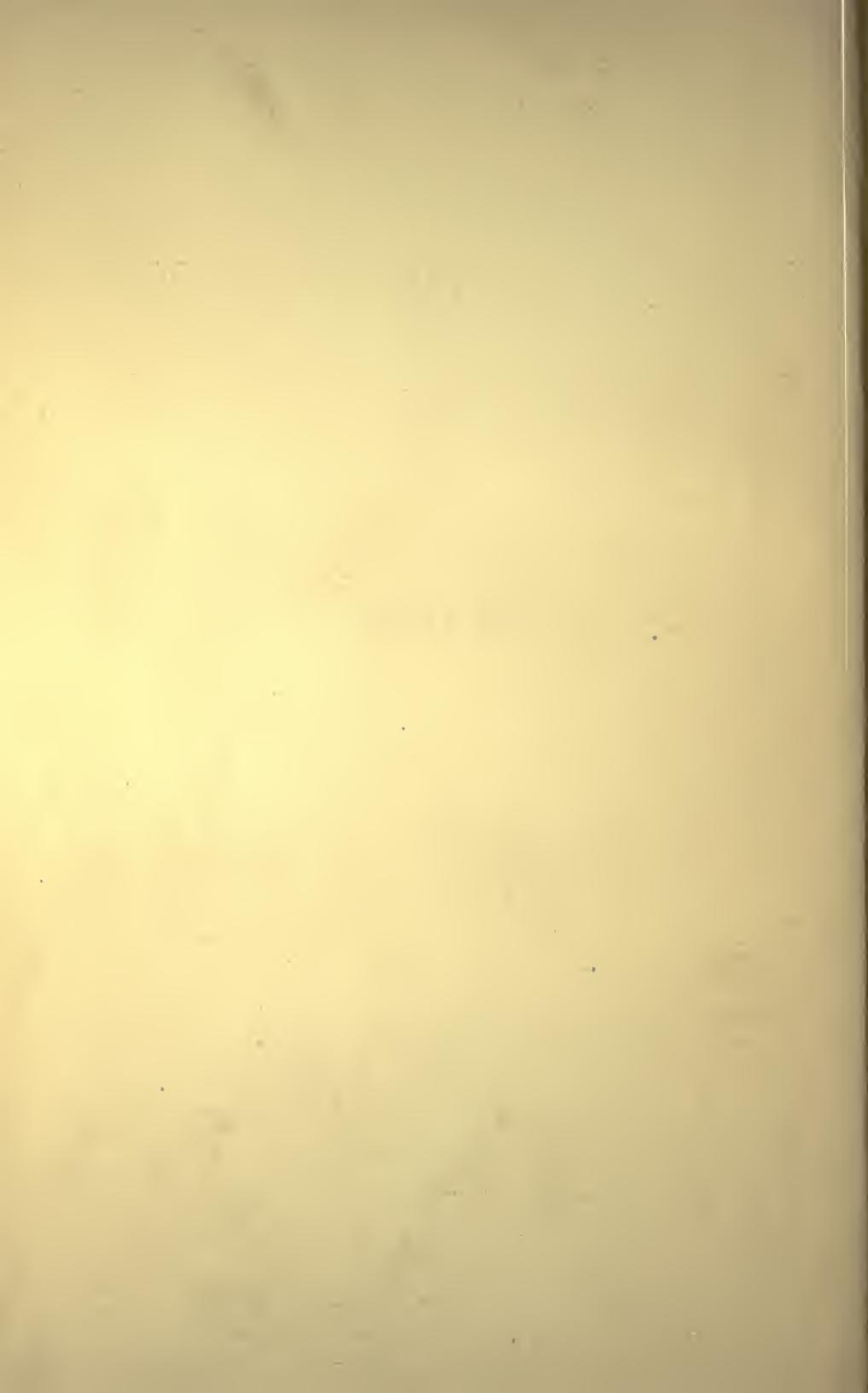
3. *Elizabeth*, wife of James Tempest.

4. *Cornelia*, wife of John Wight, of Katharine Hall, Guildford.

5. *Frances*, wife of Thomas Bispham, of Co. Lancashire.



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